

EXAMINING TEXT SEDIMENTS—COMMENDING A PIONEER HISTORIAN AS AN “AFRICAN HERODOTUS”: ON THE MAKING OF THE NEW ANNOTATED EDITION OF C.C. REINDORF’S *HISTORY OF THE GOLD COAST AND ASANTE*¹

HEINZ HAUSER-RENNER
UNIVERSITY OF ZÜRICH

I

In 1995 Paul Jenkins, the former Basel Mission archivist, called my attention to Carl Christian Reindorf’s Gã manuscripts kept at the archives in Basel, knowing that I had lived and worked in Ghana in the 1980s and that I was able to speak, read, and write the Gã language of Accra and its neighborhood.² Of course I already knew Reindorf and his monumental *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* published in 1895 in English, as I had written my M.A. thesis on late-nineteenth-century Asante history, and moreover I was very much interested in Gã history. Reindorf’s massive, substantive, and systematic work about the people of modern southern Ghana may be considered a pioneering intellectual achievement because it was one of the first large-scale historical work about an African region written by an African, and it was highly innovative, including both written sources and oral historical narratives and new methods for the reconstruction of African

¹The present paper and the new edition of Carl Christian Reindorf’s *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* (Basel, 1895; hereafter *History*) were made possible by a grant from the Swiss National Fund (SNF). The SNF supported me with a two-year scholarship, and financial support for research stays in Ghana and the UK.

²Basel Mission Archives (henceforth BMA) D-20.27 (D.I.g.3a). Carl Christian Reindorf, Shika-ŋshonaa le ke Ashante. Blemasane ni anyie blemasaji ni agba ke naabu titri ke saji ni aɲma hu no aɲma le, Ni ji saji ni eba jen miinshe afii ohai ete mli: keje afi 1500 le no keyashi afi 1856 le (Gold Coast n.d. [1891]). [hereafter *Gã MS* (1891)]; BMA D-20.26 (D.I.g.3). Carl Christian Reindorf, Shika-ŋshonaa le ke Ashante. Blemasaji ni ba ye afii 50 mli. Keje afi 1800 keeyashi 1854. (Gold Coast, n.d. [1912])—hereafter *Gã MS* (1912).

history. The book has excited interest ever since it first appeared 110 years ago because it contains an unrivaled wealth of information on the history and culture of southern Ghana.

A preliminary glimpse at the two heaps of folios wrapped with linen ropes at the archives showed that the manuscripts—none of them were dated—contained two different versions of the English *History*. That day, when I first laid my hands on the brownish, carefully folded papers, I was not aware that I was to embark on an intensive period of arduous transcribing and translating work (sometimes “lost in translation”), breathtaking archival investigations in Basel, London, and Accra, and of an exciting text/context research (unearthing sources, excavating informants, examining sediments/versions). The feelings that accompanied the analysis and treatment of the texts were something between falling in love, tracking down a deer in the forest, the goose-skin emotions of a crime scene investigator finding evidence, and the satisfaction of a mad Bacchus tearing apart Orpheus. Looking at the “disjunct members” of Reindorf and his *History*, at times I felt I had both disenchanted the author and his work. But now, after twelve years of work on the new edition (even surpassing the “non-umque prematur in annum”), I can commend a pioneer historian and a unique piece of African historiography.

This paper aims at documenting decisions, procedures, practices, and complications in the editing process. Moreover, it attempts to set Reindorf’s work into a historiographical context, and it presents the history of Reindorf’s texts and the reception of the published *History* after 1895.

II

Except the historian, that monarch of the past, using his noblest privileges, when he takes a survey of his dominions, has only to touch the ruins and dead bodies with his pen, in order to rebuild the palaces, and resuscitate the men. At his voice, like that of the Deity, the dry bones re-unite, the living flesh again covers them, brilliant dresses again clothe them; and in that immense Jehoshaphal (Joel 3.2.12), where the children of three thousand years are collected, his own caprice alone regulates his choice, and he has only to announce the names of those Maroons, or those Settlers he requires, to behold them start forth from their tombs, remove the folds of their grave-clothes with their own hands, and answer like Lazarus to our blessed Saviour, “Here am I, Lord! What dost thou want with me?”³

³Aaron Belisarius Cosimo Sibthorpe, cite. in Christopher Fyfe, “A.B.C. Sibthorpe: a Tribute,” *HA* 19(1992), 327.

The study of historiography commonly focuses on all human endeavors to communicate and record the knowledge or the memory of past experiences, events, conditions, processes, and expectations in durable and (often) esthetic forms. Historiography was intimately linked with literacy up to a few decades ago, but since then also is meant to include the oral transmission of historical knowledge. In the process of contextualizing Reindorf's historical writings in both English and Gã, the following questions had to be dealt with: What exactly is meant by African historiography? Is it defined by its object, i.e., African history, and/or by the authors' identity? Who is a historian and what is history in the African context? What role does the historian's interest(s) play in the historiographical context? Is there a unifying element in African historiography? Does it make sense to classify African historiographies on the basis of analysis of region, period, language, literary tradition, author (internal-external), and/or type (written-oral)?

Reindorf's *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* can be classified as an example of a corpus of historical works written by western-educated Africans in the period between the 1850s and the 1940s. In 1853 the Euroafrican Catholic priest Abbé David Boilat (1814-1901) of St. Louis in Senegal published his *Esquisses Sénégalaises* in which he combined a historical and ethnographic approach.⁴ Aaron Belisarius Cosimo Sibthorpe (ca.1840-1916), a schoolteacher in Sierra Leone, published his *History of Sierra Leone* in 1868. Sibthorpe's background is still shrouded in mystery, but it appears that his parents came from Nigeria and that he was liberated from a slave ship as a boy and subsequently settled in Sierra Leone.⁵ Samuel Johnson (1846-1901), who—like the aforementioned authors—also came from a missionary/Christian background, completed his *History of the Yorubas* in 1897, but it was not published until 1921.⁶

While this brief list is definitely incomplete, it has to be pointed out that these works have been used by modern historians as sources rather than looked at as African historiography. However, some of these African authors of early written historical works have been “analyzed” and termed amateur historians, of missionary/Christian background, cultural nationalists, and that they wrote history to preserve oral traditions and in view of presenting the African perspective of history vis-à-vis contemporary African historiography written by Europeans.⁷ In view of this, I advocate

⁴I. Hrbek, “Written sources from the fifteenth century onwards,” *General History of Africa* (Berkeley, 1981), 1:133.

⁵Fyfe, “A.B.C. Sibthorpe,” 327-52.

⁶Paul Jenkins, ed., *The Recovery of the West African Past: African Pastors and African History in the Nineteenth Century: C.C. Reindorf & Samuel Johnson* (Basel, 1998).

⁷See e.g. J.D. Fage, “The Development of African Historiography,” *General History of Africa* (Berkeley, 1981), 1:38-39; Eckhardt Fuchs and Benedikt Stuchtey, *Across Cultural Borders. Historiography in Global Perspective* (New York, 2002), 8. With these scholars one must ask what an “amateur” historian is.

the idea that the amount and variety (also in regional and temporal terms) of the historiographical material does not allow any hasty generalization; meaningful statements about these African authors as historians could be reached only by analyzing their work individually, according to their own merits.

Intellectual achievements of historians like Boilat, Sibthorpe, Reindorf, Johnson, etc. need to be studied comprehensively, and ideologies and epistemologies as well as the particular historical circumstances that helped foster the creation of their histories should be theorized and analyzed. Answers to the following question would be of prime importance:

What was the biographical context of the historians, and in which context were the histories published?

What information (both in quantitative and qualitative terms) does the historian transmit to his readers?

How does “memory” as represented in African oral historical literature interact with this kind of written historiography by Africans?

How did contemporaries (both Africans and Europeans) use these histories?

Which particular methodical achievements or deficiencies are recognizable?

Which institutional support could the historian rely on?

Which categories such as time, space, language, and religion did the historian work with?

With which underlying philosophy of history was the work created? How did the historian himself think about history and historiography?

With their histories these Western-educated Africans bequeathed a literary and historical record in the form of their private reading of past realities. Thus they offer a unique opportunity of theorizing and analyzing a historical consciousness of biographical uniqueness in their work. Only after thorough individual analysis can we move on to “connect” the various histories produced between the 1850s and 1940s into an intellectual history. Which were the common features? What differences can we make out? Which moments of change and continuity can we identify in this rather arbitrarily chosen period between the advent of the first written history of an African region written by an African and the beginning of academic African history? Can the period from the 1850s to the 1940s still hold as distinct epoch in African historiography?

A hitherto largely ignored historiographical category is represented by newspaper articles or other shorter texts written by Africans.⁸ Another

⁸E.g., in the South African weekly newspaper *Isidigimi Sama Xosa* (*The Xhosa Messenger*), published between 1870 and 1880 by John Tengo Jabavu (1859–1921), appeared a collection of Xhosa historical traditions by William Wellington Gqoba (1840–1888). The same is true for the Gold Coast context. There are several historiographical texts by vari-

future task for the study of African historiography and the intellectual history of that period will be the evaluation of publications that fall betwixt and between politics and history, and which had overt nationalistic interests. Among them may be counted the works of the Sierra Leonean James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-83) and the American/Liberian Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912).⁹ They touched on many historical subjects, but usually for purposes of their political ideas. This might also be true in the Gold Coast context for John Mensah Sarbah (1864-1910), Joseph Ephraim Casely-Hayford (1866-1930) and J.B. Danquah (1895-1965).¹⁰ Perhaps less political were J.W. de Graft Johnson's *Towards Nationhood in West Africa* (1928) and his *Historical Geography of the Gold Coast* (1929) and E.J.P. Brown's *A Gold Coast and Asante Reader* (1929).

Another promising approach would be a comparative analysis of the above-mentioned works of Boilat, Sibthorpe, Reindorf, Johnson, et al. with African historiography created in an apparent other context, e.g., North Africa.¹¹ Francophone and anglophone Africa are so near and yet so far—an experience which probably most scholars of African history can confirm. In fact, there were African historians in francophone countries such as Benin/Dahomé, e.g., Félix Couchoro (1900-1968) who wrote the historical novel *L'Esclave* (1929), Paul Hazoumé (1890-1980) who was the author of the ethnohistoriographical study *Le Pacte de sang au Dahomey* (1937), and

ous authors in contemporary newspapers between the 1850s and the end of the century. What about unpublished historiographies repining as manuscripts in the mission archives?

⁹James Africanus Beale Horton, *West African Countries and People, British and Native, with the Requirements necessary for establishing that Self Government recommended by the Committee of the House of Commons, 1865; and a Vindication of the African Race* (London, 1868), and, e.g., Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Africa for the Africans* (Washington, 1872).

¹⁰John Mensah Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution: a Short Treatise on the Constitution and Government of the Fanti, Ashanti, and other Akan Tribes of West Africa* (London, 1906); Joseph Ephraim Casely-Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions: Thoughts Upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (London, 1903); J.B. Danquah, *Akim Abuakwa Handbook* (London, 1928); idem., *Akan Laws and Customs* (London, 1928).

¹¹E.g. a comparison with *In the Land of the Pharaohs* (1911), a history of Egypt, written by Mohamed Ali Duse (1866-1945) who was an actor, historian, journalist, and publisher. He was born in Egypt of Egyptian-Sudanese parentage, and educated in England where he also settled before moving to the United States in 1920. What differences were there between the Christian and the Muslim historians of that age? Examples for a fruitful comparison might be Shaikh Musa Kamara (1864-1945) of Senegal and his *Zuhur ul-Basatin fi Ta'rikh is-Sawadin*, or the work of al-Nasiri al-Slawi (d.1897) who wrote a general history of Morocco with special emphasis on the 19th century, combining African and Western methods and using archival documents as well. See David Robinson, "Un historien et anthropologue sénégalais: Shaikh Musa Kamara," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 109(1988), 89-116.

of the historical novel *Dogicimi* (1938), Maximilien Quénou (b. 1911) and his *Au Pays des Fon* (1938), Julien Alapini (1906-71), who wrote *Contes dahoméens* (1941), and Casimir Agbo (1889-1976) whose *Histoire de Ouidah* (1959, written 1946-55) had a similar status to the work of Reindorf and Johnson.

According to Robin Law, francophone historiography by Africans apparently developed only some decades later than in English-speaking colonies, and appears to have been more fully integrated into the metropolitan French literary and institutional establishment.¹² Another focus of evaluation may be a comparison of African historiographies such as Reindorf's, Johnson's etc. with the "histories" of African heads of states such as Asantehene Agyeman Prempe (r. 1888-95, 1926-31 as Kumasehene), Fio Agbanon II (1898-1972), and Sultan Ibrahim Njoya of Bamum (1876-1933).¹³ The scope of comparative analysis may also be extended to early African-American historical literature such as the work of the already-mentioned E.W. Blyden, or Alexander Crummell (1819-1898), Joseph Anténor Firmin (1850-1911), Jean Price-Mars (1875-1969), Carter Godwin Woodson (1875-1950), William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963), and William Leo Hansberry (1894-1965).

The study of African historiography of the period between 1850 and the 1940s still awaits a thorough cross-regional, functional, diachronic, and text-critical analysis of the works by Africans—not as sources but as historical works. Another line of African historiography—perhaps the most "African" in form, content and function—comprised the local African historical knowledge that was narrated, sung, and integrated into cultural practices such as rituals, dances, festivals, drum and horn texts. Boilat, Sibthorpe, Reindorf, and Johnson integrated oral art into their histories, and it was rediscovered by academic historians, both Africans and non-Africans, after 1960 as an important source for the writing of African history. The oral approach of the sub-Saharan Africans was an attitude to reality and not the absence of a skill, and whoever studies African oral historical literature today must thoroughly understand and accept the attitude towards speech and the philosophy of language of oral societies. There has been much work done on the nature, social, and mental framework, function, problems of

¹²Robin Law, *Ouidah: the Social History of a West African Slaving 'Port' 1727-1892* (Oxford, 2004), 20.

¹³Adu Boahen et al., eds., *The History of Ashanti Kings and the Whole Country Itself, and Other Writings by Nana Otumfuo Agyeman Prempeh I* (Oxford, 2003); Fio Agbanon, *Histoire de Petit-Popo et du Royaume Guin* (1934), ed. N.L. Gayibor (Paris, 1991); Ibrahim Njoya, *Histoire et coutumes des Bamum, rédigées sous la direction du Sultan Njoya*, trans. P. Henri Martin (Paris, 1952).

chronology, and the evaluation of oral art as source for African history since the 1950s.

What is still lacking is a critical approach towards oral historical literature as viable form of historiography and as object of study in itself: Who were the authors and what was the context of production, transmission, and reception? What was the relationship between this kind of historiography and the way people thought about history, language, time, and place (or rather space)? Above all, there should be thorough analysis of change and continuity as regards content, form, and function. Modern scholars have all too often only attempted to evaluate oral narratives in view of their use as sources, and often forgotten that it must be assumed that oral historical literature itself underwent changes over time, and that its production was a dynamic process. Not to mention the diffusion of ideas about history and its representation between different areas of the African continent.

III

There are a number of interesting texts that deal with Carl Christian Reindorf's life and career. Reindorf himself wrote two autobiographical sketches. He wrote the first in 1855, when he was twenty-one years old, at the request of his tutor from the Basel Mission, Johannes Zimmermann, before becoming a catechist of the Mission.¹⁴ Reindorf composed yet another biographical text in the form of a speech he delivered at his ordination as a minister of the Basel Mission in 1872.¹⁵ Apart from these two precious texts from the Basel Mission archives I made use of the biographical essay written by his son C.E. Reindorf (1877-1968) published in the second edition of the *History* in 1950/1966. In his opening lines C.E. Reindorf mentioned that he would narrate "the incidents of his [father's] life as noted down by himself a few years before his lamented death."¹⁶

In addition to these three autobiographical texts, the bulk of data on Reindorf presented in the new edition of the *History* is found in the Basel Mission archives. In 1872 the Basel missionary Elias Schrenk composed a kind of recommendation for the chairman ("Präses") of the general conference ("Generalkonferenz") at the Basel Mission headquarters in Basel in

¹⁴Johannes Zimmermann (1825-1876), missionary on the coast from 1850 to 1872. BMA D-1,6 Afrika 1855. "Biography of Carl Christian Reindorf" (Damfa, 21. Sept. 1855), in Steinhauser and Zimmermann to Committee (Abokobi, Jan. 1856).

¹⁵BMA D-1,24 Afrika 1872, Christiansborg Nr. 95. Biography of Carl Christian Reindorf as delivered at the ordination on 13 October 1872.

¹⁶C.E. Reindorf, "Biography of Rev. Carl Christian Reindorf," in C.C. Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante* (1966), 3-23.

which he informed him about the stages of development of the catechist Reindorf.¹⁷ This important document of one of his European employers throws light on the viewpoint of the Basel Mission on its future minister. Further valuable data about Reindorf's life and activities can be found in the correspondence, minutes of meetings, and annual reports at the Basel Mission archives.

There is hardly any historian on Ghanaian history who has not used Reindorf's *History* as a source in his or her work. Nevertheless, the importance of the *History* in modern research is inversely proportional to the number of secondary works and the interest in source-criticism of historians using the *History*. However, Ray Jenkins thoroughly studied the differences between the *History* of 1895 and the second edition of 1950/1966 and published his results in two articles in *History in Africa*.¹⁸ In 1982 Mercy A. Vanderpuije wrote her B.A. thesis about the Reindorf family, which was submitted at the University of Ghana and has not been published since.¹⁹ In 1984 a brochure entitled "Remembering Rev. Carl Christian Reindorf" was published; it included data on the Reindorf family.²⁰ Ray Jenkins followed up a year later with his doctoral thesis entitled "Gold Coast Historians and their Pursuit of the Gold Coast Pasts."²¹ There Jenkins dedicated a chapter to Reindorf and focused on Reindorf's role as an African amateur historian, his motives, and his methodology. Unfortunately the dissertation has never been published because of the author's untimely death. John Parker has thrown light on Reindorf's identity as a Euro-African and his involvement in local politics at Accra in his dissertation entitled "Gã State and Society in Early Colonial Accra" in 1995.²² Peter Händler's research about the Basel Mission and slavery on the Gold Coast culminated in a publication in 1995. In this work, Reindorf's role as a slave- and pawn-holder and his resulting conflict with the Basel Mission in 1862 is discussed in detail.²³

¹⁷Elias Schrenk (1831-1913), missionary on the Gold Coast from 1859 to 1872. BMA D-1,24 Afrika 1872. Schrenk, Carl Christian Reindorf Catechist (Christiansborg 21 Jan 1872).

¹⁸Ray Jenkins, "Impeachable Source? On the Use of the Second Edition of Reindorf's *History* as a Primary Source for the Study of Ghanaian History," HA 4(1977) 123-48; 5(1978) 81-100.

¹⁹Mercy A. Vanderpuije, "A Study of the Reindorf Family of Accra" (B.A., University of Ghana, 1982).

²⁰Joe Reindorf. ed., *150th Birthday Anniversary (1834-1984): Remembering Rev. Carl Reindorf* (Accra, 1984).

²¹Ray Jenkins, "Gold Coast Historians and their Pursuit of the Gold Coast Pasts: 1882-1917" (PhD Univ. of Birmingham 1985).

²²John Parker, "Gã State and Society in Early Colonial Accra, 1860s-1920s" (Ph.D., SOAS, 1995). The dissertation has subsequently been published as John Parker, *Making the Town: Gã State and Society in Early Colonial Accra* (Portsmouth, 2000).

²³Peter Haenger, *Sklaverei und Sklavenemanzipation an der Goldküste* (Basel, 1995).

In 1995 the University of Basel and the Basel Mission commemorated the 100th birthday of Reindorf's *History* with an international conference that was attended by such prominent historians and linguists as Thomas Bearth, Thomas McCaskie, John Parker, Emmanuel Akyeampong, and Adam Jones. Their presentations were published in *The Recovery of the West African Past: African Pastors and African History in the Nineteenth Century*.²⁴ Next to chapters by Peter Hänger and John Parker, who relate to their particular fields of research, the book includes contributions by Bearth, who throws light on the relationship between Reindorf and the Basel missionary J.G. Christaller, by McCaskie who clarifies on the role of the Asante played in Reindorf's *History*, and by Akyeampong who focuses on the notion of "power" in the *History*. Adam Jones' chapter "Reindorf the Historian" elucidates on Reindorf's sources and methodology.

Another secondary work to be mentioned here is Adam Jones' *Zwei indigene Ethnographien der Goldküste im 19. Jahrhundert* published in 1998.²⁵ In this contribution Jones clarifies the value of Reindorf's *History* in terms of anthropological information about the people of southern Ghana. A very recent publication is *Carl Christian Reindorf: Colonial Subjectivity and Drawn Boundaries* by Seth Quartey, published in 2006.

IV

In early 1889 Carl Christian Reindorf completed his English manuscript entitled "The Gold Coast and Ashante" which was in the course of 1893 altered by Reindorf to the final *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* at Osu.²⁶ The manuscript represented the culmination of about twenty-five years of collecting data and active historical research. Reindorf started in or about 1864, when he was inspired by missionary Christian Gottlob Aldinger to collect the "oral traditions" of the people. The death of his paternal grandmother Okako Asase four years earlier also made him conscious of the fact that orally-transmitted history was "slowly dying out" and that "with the dawn of education" it was gradually being neglected and regarded as a minor form of knowledge: ". . . the old lady was dead and the old people though possessing a vast store of tradition, refrained from imparting it."²⁷

²⁴Jenkins, *Recovery*.

²⁵Adam Jones, "Zwei indigene Ethnographien der Goldküste im 19. Jahrhundert," in Behrend and Geider, eds., *Afrikaner schreiben zurück: Texte und Bilder afrikanischer Ethnographen* (Köln, 1998), 27-40.

²⁶Year derived from dating of the "Preface": June 1889. See Jenkins "Impeachable," 295. On the change of the title, see BMA D-20.27,7 (1): Reindorf to Christaller (Hebron, 26 Aug 1893) 2. In fact, "The Gold Coast and Ashante" was also part of the title of the Gā manuscript of 1891 (see below).

²⁷*History* (1895), i, iv; *Gā MS* (1912), II.

The question of when Reindorf did the actual writing of the manuscript remains quite complex. Ray Jenkins has suggested that from internal evidence in the *History* Reindorf started to write up his manuscript after 1874.²⁸ The following passages from the *History* can give a hint:

- p. 1 Our object is the Gold Coast ... (post-1874 latitudes and longitudes)
- p. 117 ... especially as the Gold Coast has become an English Colony (in 1874)...
- p. 121 The late King Karikari of Kumase [d. 1874], upon his accession to the stool,
...
p. 160 The entire suppression and general emancipation of slaves ... could not be
effected ... till the year 1874, ...
p. 219 ... in the colony [post-1874] ...
p. 285 ... resulted in a civil war between Kumase and Dwaben in the year 1876, ...

A Basel Mission report of 1883 maintained that Reindorf, while working as pastor of the Christian community of Osu, was particularly busy with writing in that year.²⁹ From internal evidence it is also apparent that a lot of the work—both research and writing up—was done in the 1880s while Reindorf was at Osu:

- p. 5 we give the following account from the “Western Echo” [on 30 January and 24 February 1886]³⁰
- p. 265 The origin of palm-wine is ... reported by the “Western Echo” (a local weekly paper edited at Cape Coast by Prince Brew of Dunkwa [1886]).
- p. 284 We humbly suggest to our colonial government chapter XVIII, pp. 249-264 in the “Sketch of the Forestry of West Africa” [1887] by his Excellency Alfred Moloney C.M.G., a book written by one of our governors!³¹

Between 1889 and 1891 Reindorf tried to have his book financed and printed in England. In a letter of December 1891 to J.P. Werner & Co, the agent and solicitor of the Basel Mission trading company in London, he mentioned that his arrangements with Mr Fischer of a British-German firm had

²⁸Jenkins, “Impeachable,” 306.

²⁹Wilhelm Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission, 1915-1919. Nach einem Manuskript von Wilhelm Schlatter † bearbeitet von Hermann Witschi* (Basel, 1965), 4:163.

³⁰The article which Reindorf referred to appeared in the issues of the *Western Echo* of 30 January and 24 February 1886 respectively. The *Western Echo* was owned by James Huton Brew from Dunkwa and edited by J.E. Casely Hayford and Timothy Laing. Its forerunner, the *Gold Coast Times*, had been founded by Brew in March 1874 and was suspended for some time until it was revived in November 1885 as the *Western Echo*. See Fred I.A. Omu, “The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa: the West African Example,” *JAH* 9(1968), 286; K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, *A Summary History of the Ghana Press, 1822-1960* (Accra, 1974), 6-13.

³¹Alfred Moloney, *A Sketch of the Forestry of West Africa* (London, 1887).

failed.³² Reindorf had apparently asked the employer of his 23 year-old son Christian Josiah, who was in Liverpool at the headquarters of Messrs. J.J. Fischer for commercial training from 1891 to 1893, for financial assistance.³³

In the course of 1891 Reindorf also wrote to the Basel Mission headquarters in Basel to its executive head inspector Theodor Oehler (1850-1915) appealing for assistance in financing the printing of the *History*. He also offered to pay the money back later with the profits made with the sale of the book.³⁴ But the Basel Mission headquarters refused to make a contribution to the costs of printing the *History*. Adam Jones has suggested that the Mission's refusal was connected to the rather secular style of the *History* and the "fetish" contents in parts of it.³⁵ Carl Christian Reindorf finally privately financed his book as the correspondence between Reindorf and Christaller of 1893 and the words "Printed for the Author" on the title page of the *History* indicate.³⁶ Unfortunately no details are known as to how Reindorf managed to raise the capital. Was he able to save some money from his salary as employee of the Basel Mission? Did he use the profits from coffee production on his farm? He might also have borrowed part of the money either on the Gold Coast or in London via his son Christian Josiah or his son-in-law Charles James Bannerman. Christian Josiah, who had worked as agent for a European firm at Simpa/Winneba since 1893, may have been one of Reindorf's silent financial supporters. According to a letter of C.J. Reindorf of June 1903 to the Colonial Secretary, C.J. had bought land worth £640 at Banka in Akyem in early 1900.³⁷ Perhaps J.G.

³²BMA D-20.27.8. Reindorf to J.P. Werner, London (Osu, 30 December 1891), 1. The same firm, J.P. Werner of London, took over trading concerns of the Basel Mission trading company when the mission was expelled from the Gold Coast in 1918. See David Killingray, "Repercussions of World War I in the Gold Coast," *JAH* 19(1978), 43; and Margaret Gannon, "The Basel Mission Trading Company and British Colonial Policy in the Gold Coast, 1918-1928," *JAH* 24(1983), 503.

³³Reindorf, *150th Birthday*, 13, 17.

³⁴Theodor Oehler (1850-1915) entered the Basel Mission in 1885, and was pastor and inspector of the Basel Mission from 1885 to 1909 and director from 1909 to 1915. BMA D-20.27.8. Reindorf to J.P. Werner, London (Osu, 30 December 1891), 1.

³⁵Adam Jones, "Reindorf the Historian," in Jenkins, *Recovery*, 115-33. Reindorf, however, made great efforts to "cleanse" oral narratives from its "fetish" contents.

³⁶At the beginning of 1893 Christaller wrote to Reindorf: "[w]ith regard to your English work I can only wish that you may find a way to get it printed and that you may at least get your expenses reimbursed." BMA D-20.27.7. Christaller to Reindorf (Schorndorf, n.d. [1893]), 7.

³⁷Robert Addo-Fening, "Ofori Atta, Mate Kole, and Jurisdiction over the Krobo Plantations," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 3(1999), 90.

Christaller or other fellow Basel missionaries privately donated some money towards the printing.³⁸

In late 1891 the whole English manuscript of the *History* was in London with a publisher. Reindorf was informed that the cost for printing and binding a thousand copies of the book would amount to £175 of which £15 remained to be paid by him. Reindorf then sent instructions to the publisher via J.P. Werner about the types to be used, how the book should be bound and that his "title to the copyright should be registered at the Stationer's Register."³⁹

In March 1892 Reindorf wrote to the Basel missionary Paul Steiner (1849-1941) in Switzerland and asked him to read the proof sheets of the English manuscript.⁴⁰ At the same time he wrote a letter to Paul Ensinger (d.1925), head of the Basel Mission administration, in which he asked him—apparently expecting that the books would soon be printed—to send 200 copies of the printed *History* to his son-in-law C.J. Bannerman in London and 200 copies to the Gold Coast.⁴¹ Reindorf hoped to raise the remaining balance of £10 or £15 for the printing expenses through the sale of the book.⁴²

Paul Steiner seemingly referred Reindorf's request to the pensioned Johann Gottlieb Christaller (1827-1895), Reindorf's "fellow-labourer" and colleague at Akropong (Akuapem) in the 1860s, who had been responsible for Mission publications in Akan/Twi and Gã since 1869. Christaller was ready to help Reindorf and to supervise the publication of the *History*.

³⁸Paul Jenkins, "Introduction" in Jenkins, *Discovery*, 13, noted that Reindorf's manuscript seems to have been largely ignored at the Basel Mission headquarters. He mentions that the *History* certainly did not appear under the Mission's imprint or became part of the Mission's conscious historic identity. Moreover, Jenkins declared that the international seminar on African history staged by the University of Basel in connection with its interdisciplinary Programme on African History and Cultures in 1995 to mark the centenary of the publication of the first edition of Reindorf's book was intended as an act of historical Wiedergutmachung. See also *History* (1895), viii; H.M.J. Trutenau, "The Basel Mission's Gold Coast 'Christian Messenger', 1833-1931: The 'Christian Messenger' and its Successors: A Description of the First Three Series of a Missionary Periodical with Articles in Ghanaian Languages (Twi and Ga), 1883-1931," *Mitteilungen der Basler Afrika Bibliographien* 9(1973), 40.

³⁹BMA D-20.27.8. Reindorf to J.P. Werner, London (Osu, 30 December 1891), 2. From 1554 until 1924 copyright was normally secured by registration with the Stationers' Company in London. Copyright records held at the National Archives (ex-Public Record Office, London) cover the years 1842 to 1924.

⁴⁰Paul Steiner (1849-1941) entered the Basel Mission in 1867. He was a private tutor and worked as a missionary on the Gold Coast from 1872 to 1889. He was the editor of the *Missionsmagazin* from 1890 to 1911.

⁴¹Paul Ensinger was head of the Basel Mission administration, responsible for finance, from 1873 to 1919. See Schlatter, *Geschichte*, 4:70.

⁴²BMA D-20.27.7 (1). Reindorf to Christaller (Hebron, 26 Aug 1893) 3; BMA D-20.27.7. Christaller Notes (27 Sept. 1895), 1.

Christaller was the most prominent linguist of the Basel Mission, and had studied Akan/Twi and Gã since the 1860s. The English manuscript was revised by Christaller—in 1893 pensioned and back in Germany—with the help of a friend, the ex-missionary Johann Benignus Gräter (1838-1895), who spoke English “as his mother-tongue” according to Christaller.⁴³ Gräter was born in Boston and grew up in southern Germany. English was most probably not his mother-tongue, but Gräter was an English teacher. Between 1863 and 1885 Gräter had worked in India in the service of the Basel Mission.⁴⁴ The Basel Mission’s printer, L. Reinhardt, eventually agreed to print the final draft of the *History* in Basel.

In May 1893 Reindorf retired from work because of ill-health and moved from Osu to his farm “Hebron” near Aburi in the Akuapem hills. In his correspondence with Christaller, he mentioned that he was lacking everything on the farm—even a writing-table—and that he would not “be able to be of much service” to Christaller for some time.⁴⁵ Later in 1893 Reindorf discussed the matter of the types to be used for printing with fellow Basel missionary Jakob F. Schopf (1851-1917) at Osu. They decided to use Garamond, the same type that was used for the new Basel Mission liturgy attached to the new hymn book. Schopf subsequently informed Paul Ensinger of the Basel Mission administration about it.⁴⁶

In July 1893 the English manuscript was already with the retired missionary and English teacher Gräter. Gräter suggested changing some of the contents, but Christaller immediately notified him that “he should refrain from altering the thoughts and confine himself to grammatical or stylistic improvements” as Reindorf had paid for the printing.⁴⁷ Christaller expected Gräter to send the manuscript to him soon for a first reading. At that time Christaller lived in Schondorf, Gräter in Heidelberg, and the printer in Basel. This undoubtedly added to the hard work of correcting, revising, and proof-reading.

In mid-1893 Reindorf and Christaller discussed the orthography of African names and places by way of correspondence. Christaller suggested using the international Lepsius orthography and “to pronounce the name of a town or country as the inhabitants do.”⁴⁸ In his reply Reindorf agreed that

⁴³*History* (1895) viii; Trutenau, “Basel Mission,” 40.

⁴⁴BMA Gräter Personal File 584; *History* (1895), viii; Adam Jones, “Reindorf, the Historian” in Jenkins, *Discovery*, 121n21.

⁴⁵BMA D-20.27.7 (1). Reindorf to Christaller (Hebron, 26 Aug 1893), 2.

⁴⁶*Ibid.* 2.

⁴⁷BMA D-20.27.7. Christaller to Reindorf (14 July 1893).

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, The Berlin Professor Richard Lepsius (1810-84) published this orthography in *Das Allgemeine linguistische Alphabet. Grundsätze der Übertragung fremder Schriftsysteme und bisher noch ungeschriebener Sprachen in europäische Buchstaben* (1855); *Standard Alphabet for Reducing Unwritten Languages and Foreign Graphic Systems to a Uniform Orthography in European Letters* (1863); and *Nubische Grammatik mit einer*

patronyms, ethnonyms, and toponyms should be spelled as they were pronounced in the language of the people they were associated with. But Reindorf preferred to leave orthographical issues up to Christaller because he thought that Christaller was “by far superior and well experienced in such matters. So you [Christaller] and Mr Graetter may change any thing and add anything you find advisable to get the book [to] pass creditably.”⁴⁹

In August 1893 Reindorf informed Paul Ensinger of the Basel Mission administration via Christaller that he wished to have the photographs of “King Taki,” i.e., the Gã head of state Nii Taki Tawia (b. 1834, r. 1862–1902), the “Ashante King,” “Aduanan Apea” (Adwumakohene, r. 1810s–April 1824), the bombardment of Christiansborg and of himself printed in the *History*.⁵⁰ Except for pictures of Reindorf on the title page and of Aduanan Apea, none of these were eventually included in the publication.⁵¹ In December 1893 Reindorf expressed his anxiety about the progress of the work in Europe. Reindorf was temporarily staying at Osu at the time and he had presumably been asked by friends about it. He also asked Christaller if missionary Paul Steiner had received his letter of March 1893 and if the same was willing to co-correct the proof sheets. Reindorf was also not sure if Ensinger was ready to send 200 copies of the *History* to C.J. Bannermann and 200 copies to the Gold Coast so that he could raise the balance of the printing costs.⁵²

In February 1894 Reindorf informed Christaller that he should leave those parts of the *History* that were not yet “proven,” e.g. verified by an external sources, until they had new facts and then revise those parts. Christaller must have disagreed with a certain (unidentified) part of the *History* because he had given Reindorf the details of a particular source, John L. Wilson’s *Western Africa* (1859), which the latter did not know yet.⁵³

Einleitung über die Völker und Sprachen Afrikas (1880). Christaller (*Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language Called Tshi* (1881) ix) criticized the Wesleyan missionaries in the Fante area for their use of an alternative orthography, observing metaphorically that “the Fantes would build a railway of their own different gauge, so that no cars of the western railway could be used on the easter [railway, i.e., the Gold Coast].” Paul Jenkins, “The Basel Mission’s Gold Coast ‘Christian Messenger’ 1833–1931: a Forgotten Vernacular Periodical,” *Mitteilungen der Basler Africa Bibliographien* 9(1973), 30, noted that a number of letters passing between J.G. Christaller and the British and Foreign Bible Society in the 1870s and 1880s on orthographical conventions to be used in publications are included in Christaller’s personal file in the Basel Mission Archives. See also *History* (1895), vi, 245.

⁴⁹BMA D-20.27,7 (1). Reindorf to Christaller (Hebron, 26 Aug 1893) 2–3; BMA D-20.27,7 (3). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 23 Feb 1894), 3.

⁵⁰BMA D-20.27,7 (1). Reindorf to Christaller (Hebron, 26 Aug 1893), 3.

⁵¹For Aduanan Apea’s picture, see *History* (1895) facing 186.

⁵²BMA D-20.27,7 (2). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 14 Dec 1893), 1.

⁵³BMA D-20.27,7 (3). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 23 Feb 1894), 1–2. John L. Wilson, *Western Africa: Its History, Condition and Prospects* (New York, 1856). Rev. John Leighton Wilson (1809–1886) was an American Presbyterian missionary. He lived and

Reindorf agreed that the two Mission book depots at Accra and Cape Coast should be commissioned with the sale of part of the printed books. He also asked J.P. Werner in Liverpool to make arrangements with a publisher and bookseller in London via Christaller. Reindorf's son Christian Josiah had earlier suggested "Messrs Chapman and Hall, Publishers, Covent Garden, Strand W.C.," who were known to be publishers of Gold Coast books.⁵⁴ In the same letter of February 1894 Reindorf mentioned that he would decide later how many books should be given to each depot and how many books he would keep for himself. He wanted to reduce the total number of printed copies to 500. Reindorf was seemingly still not in possession of the whole capital necessary for the printing. He was worried about Paul Ensinger if he did "not find his way clear as to defraying the whole cost of printing" with the printer Reinhardt in Basel.⁵⁵ Reindorf still hoped to get financial help somewhere before the *History* went to the press. He also asked Christaller about his ideas regarding the price to charge for a copy of the *History*.

In June 1894 Reindorf was on a visit to Mrs. L.G. Bannerman at the "Kru Coast" (Liberia).⁵⁶ While he was there he wrote a letter to Christaller in which he expressed his hope that the proof sheets would soon reach him there or that he would find them at home when he returned to Osu. Regarding the financing of the printing, Reindorf noted that he did not expect anything from the British government nor his "own people."⁵⁷ He suggested a price of 10/6, or at least 7/6 per book, "but to missionaries otherwise," whatever that meant. However, Reindorf wanted to wait until the whole expenses were clear before fixing the price. By July 1894 Reindorf—still at Liberia—had received part of the proof sheets from Christaller. He fully accepted the orthographical corrections made by Christaller and Gräter, and immediately sent further corrections of his own to Christaller. Reindorf intended to make an index for the *History* when all the proof sheets were in his possession. He was already planning to write a second revised edition of the *History*.⁵⁸

worked for 18 years in Africa between 1834 and 1856, first in Liberia and from 1842 in Gabon. Apart from Western Africa he also published *The British Squadron on the Coast of Africa . . . with Notes by Capt. H.D. Trotter, R.N.* (1851), and *Comparative Vocabularies of some of the Principal Negro Dialects of Africa* (1849). According to Fage, Wilson made use of published sources, as well as his own experience. See J.D. Fage, *A Guide to Original Sources for Precolonial Western Africa Published in European Languages* (Madison, 1987), 124.

⁵⁴BMA D-20.27,7 (3). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 23 Feb 1894), 2.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁶BMA D-20.27,7 (4). Reindorf to Christaller (Sierra Leone, 27 June 1894) 1. L.G. Bannerman remains unidentified.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸BMA D-20.27,7 (5). Reindorf to Christaller (Sierra Leone, 30 July 1894), 1-5.

By February 1895 Reindorf had returned to Osu, where he found the rest of the proof sheets that had been sent to him in the meantime. In April he wrote back to Christaller and included a whole page with remarks and corrections in his letter. The printing of the *History* was in delay because of the printers L. Reinhardt want of time. Christaller managed to include Reindorf's corrections before the final draft was printed in the form of a list of "Corrections and Additions" at the end of the book. In order to be able to produce an index, Reindorf also asked Christaller to send him a copy of the proof sheets of chapters one and two because he had returned one of them to Christaller and the other one was missing among Reindorf's papers.⁵⁹

In May 1895 Christaller asked Reindorf to get a complete list of the "Kings and royal family of Asante." Fortunately Reindorf met a fugitive member of the Asante royal family soon after at Accra, Yaw Twereboanna (ca. 1860-1908), who gave him valuable information.⁶⁰ In May 1895 Christaller requested a copy of the *Gold Coast Methodist Almanack*. Reindorf promised to order one for him at Cape Coast.

A month later Reindorf sent two lists of the former English Governors on the Gold Coast to Basel; one had been obtained from the Colonial Office in London by Charles James Bannermann, and the other from the "Secretariat here," i.e., the local British administration at the Gold Coast.⁶¹ Regarding the binding of the book, Reindorf suggested that the majority of the books be bound in England "as it would suit the taste of English buyers." The amount of copies of the *History* to be bound in Basel he left to the judgement of Christaller. Reindorf intended to write to one of his friends in London, Captain Edward Atkin, ex-District Commissioner at Accra, and ask him to find a bookseller for him in London.⁶²

Reindorf was still at Osu, where in June of 1895 he was engaged in the production of an index to the *History*, which he planned to send via mis-

⁵⁹BMA D-20.27,7 (6). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 15 April 1895) and "Corrections" to *History* (by Reindorf).

⁶⁰Yaw Twereboanna (ca. 1860-1908), Oyoko royal, was the eldest son of Asabi Boakye and Yaa Afere. From the Asante civil war of 1884-88, a period of anarchy and struggle for the Asantehene office, Agyeman Prempe, the son of Kwasi Gyambibi and Yaa Kyaa, emerged successful against his rival candidate Yaw Twereboanna. The supporters of Agyeman Prempe arrested Yaw Twereboanna and his known sympathizers around January 1887. Late in that same year, Yaw Twereboanna managed to escape and in June/July 1888, with thousands of his supporters, he took refuge in Akyem Kotoku. Subsequently Yaw Twereboanna remained in the Gold Coast Colony and in 1893 his planned return to Asante was prevented by the British. See Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: the Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge, 1975), 360, 368, 571-87; T.C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-colonial Asante* (Cambridge, 1995), 71, 492.

⁶¹BMA D-20.27,7 (7). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 10 June 1895), 1-2.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 2.

sionary Gottfried Zürcher (1863-1924) to Basel. By August of that year an index for pages 33 to 336 was on its way to Basel and, because Reindorf apparently still did not possess the proof sheets of chapter one, he asked Christaller to complete the index for him. Reindorf's index was, however, not included in the published *History* of 1895.⁶³ On 22 August 1895 Benignus Gräter, the co-corrector of the *History*, died in Esslingen, where he had moved to from Heidelberg in September 1894.

By August 1895 the Basel Mission printer Reinhardt had finished the printing of 1000 raw copies of the *History*. According to Paul Ensinger of the Basel Mission administration, the costs for the printing were not yet known.⁶⁴ In the same month Christaller sent a letter and a raw copy of the *History* to the London publishers Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. In September he wrote to them again via J.P. Werner, the agent of the Basel Mission trading company in London, asking if 400 raw copies might be bound by them.⁶⁵

A month later Reindorf expressed his gratitude to Christaller for everything he had done for him: "[i]f it were not you and Mr Steiner, I hardly can see how to get my work out. Thank you." Reindorf also requested 100 copies of the *History* to be sent straight to the Gold Coast District Book Depot at Cape Coast, and 200 to the Basel Mission Factory at Accra. He intended to decide later on how many copies he would keep for himself for sale.⁶⁶

The *History* was available in paper and linen cover. In October 1895 some ten bound copies each were sent to C.C. Reindorf and to Hermann L. Rottmann (for the Basel Mission station libraries on the Gold Coast), two copies each to the Bremen missionary Karl Köbele, who was a teacher at Little Popo/Aneho, to the co-correctors P. Steiner and B. Gräter, and—of course—to J.G. Christaller.⁶⁷ One copy was also sent to Trübner publishers

⁶³D-20.27,7 (8). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 30 Aug 1895). Reindorf's index can be found in BMA D-20.27b. Gottfried Zürcher (1863-1924) entered the Basel Mission in 1886 and worked as a missionary on the Gold Coast from 1890-95, 1897-1902, etc.

⁶⁴BMA D-20.27,7 (7). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 10 June 1895) and Concept of a Letter from Christaller to his son (26. Sept 1895); BMA D-20.27,7 (7). Binder to Christaller (Basel, 2 October 1895)

⁶⁵BMA D-20.27,7 (7). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 10 June 1895) and Concept of a Letter from Christaller to his son (26. Sept 1895). In 1889 the publishers Messrs Trübner & Co and joined Kegan Paul, Trench & Co, amalgamated and converted into Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co Ltd. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co were incorporated with Routledge and Sons to form Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, with Cecil Franklin and Sir William Crookes among the directors, in 1912.

⁶⁶D-20.27,7 (9). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 12 Sept 1895), 1.

⁶⁷Karl Köbele was J.G. Christaller's son-in-law and had been appointed "Reichsschullehrer in Togo" in the late 1880s (*Für Afrika bestimmt* [1997], 38). Hermann Ludwig Rottmann (1832-1899) entered the Basel Mission in 1853. He worked on the Gold Coast from 1854 to 1897 and was the founder and director of the Basel Mission Trading Company.

in London. In one of his letters to Christaller, Johannes Binder of the Basel Mission administration expressed his hope that the British military campaign against Asante in 1895 would have a positive impact on the demand for and the sales of the *History*.⁶⁸ For reviews, and in order to make the book known, a copy each was sent to the editors of the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, *Afrika Vereinsblatt* (Pastor Müller), *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* and the *African Times* in London.⁶⁹

In November 1895 Christaller was informed that “Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co” were ready to act as publishers in England for a charge of 15% per book. Meanwhile Reindorf had sent £45 (an equivalent of CHF 1632.95 at the time) to Basel with which the costs of “544 bound copies were covered.”⁷⁰ By January 1896, the *History* was on sale in Basel, London, Cape Coast and Osu.⁷¹ On 16 December 1895, Johann Gottlieb Christaller, the corrector and editor of Reindorf’s *History* and one of the pioneering linguists of the Basel Mission, unexpectedly passed away at the age of 68.

J.G. Christaller’s exact role in the publishing and his influences on the content of the *History* can be assessed only with difficulty. Unfortunately, only a few of his letters, i.e., notes of his letters, to Reindorf have survived at the Basel Mission archives and the original English manuscript, with which the extent of the changes made by Christaller could be ascertained, is lost. However, Christaller’s “Prefatory Remarks,” his textual glosses in the English *History*, and the analysis of his comments and corrections made in the Gã manuscript of 1891 can give some evidence. Ray Jenkins suggested that Christaller “effected substantial revisions to the original manuscript.” Thomas Bearth, however, maintained that Christaller mainly advised Reindorf in matters of style, grammar, and orthography and that he was responsible for only few corrections and additions as regards the content of the book.⁷²

⁶⁸Johannes Binder (1843-1909) entered the Basel Mission in 1866. He was on the Gold Coast from 1866 to 1893 and later worked in the Mission’s administration.

⁶⁹BMA D-20.27.7. Binder to Christaller (Basel, 6 Nov 1895), 1-2. The *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* was the journal of the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (German Colonial Society) and appeared from 1887 to 1929. The *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* was the official journal of the Reichs-Kolonialamt (ministry for the colonies) for reports and information relating to the German protectorates in Africa and elsewhere, and it appeared from 1890 to 1921. The *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* appeared from 1874 to 1923, and the *African Times* from 1862 to 1902.

⁷⁰BMA D-20.27.7. Binder to Christaller (Basel, 12 Nov 1895), 1-2.

⁷¹*History* (1895), title page.

⁷²Jenkins, “Gold Coast Historians,” 295, 297-98, and Thomas Bearth, “J.G. Christaller: A Holistic View of Language and Culture and C.C. Reindorf’s *History*,” in Jenkins, *Recovery*, 83-101.

In fact, Christaller altered only comparatively little of the contents of the *History*. Christaller's changes were limited to figures or years which were perceived as obviously wrong. Such mistakes could result from Reindorf's source material, as in the case of the year given for the building of James Fort at Accra. Christaller changed the year in Reindorf's main text and added a footnote with a source reference:

p. 27 In 1672 (not 1662) the English came to Akra*) got a piece of land and built James' Fort.

*) cf. above p. 16. J. Beecham, Ashante and the Gold Coast, p. 36. B. Cruickshank, 18 years on the Gold Coast, I. 21. Chr. [Christaller]

Christaller also occasionally adjusted and updated Reindorf's "old" with more recent figures:

p. 2 The Protectorate has an approximate ... population of about one million [Gä MS (1891): 406,000].

*) ... The number of inhabitants of the Colony and Protectorate ... has officially, after a census taken in 1891, been computed at 973,822 ...

The number 406,000, as given in the Gä text of 1891, must have been the original number included in the English (lost) manuscript. Here Christaller changed the main text (to "about one million"), and also added a footnote with a reference. Thus, Christaller occasionally added up-to-date information which had not been available to Reindorf. But Christaller—though definitely hard to prove—largely abstained from changing Reindorf's interpretations, and he also admonished co-corrector Gräter to "refrain from altering the thoughts and confine himself to grammatical or stylistic improvements."⁷³ There is no evidence in existing correspondence or in the text of the of Christaller having made major changes, so in dubio pro reo. However, in a letter of July 1894 Christaller asked Reindorf's permission to make relatively minor changes. Reindorf replied: "If you find some contradictions . . . , kindly correct them to have it uniform."⁷⁴

As mentioned above, Christaller created footnotes to refer to a wider range of source material. He and co-corrector Paul Steiner also occasionally used footnotes to convey their doubts about Reindorf's interpretations or to suggest alternative or additional hypotheses.⁷⁵ However, Christaller also augmented the text a few times with additional up-to-date information which had not been available to Reindorf—e.g. Basel Mission statistics of 1894.⁷⁶ One major textual change was suggested by Christaller in Novem-

⁷³BMA D-20.27.7. Christaller to Reindorf (14 July 1893).

⁷⁴BMA D-20.27.7 (5). Reindorf to Christaller (Sierra Leone, 30 July 1894), 4.

⁷⁵*History* (1895), 10, 267.

⁷⁶*History* (1895), 231.

ber 1894 and approved by Reindorf: The initial introductory paragraphs of chapter 17 (of the lost English manuscript) should be added at the beginning of chapter 13, and the rest of it, i.e. a list of officers who took part in the Katamanso War of 1826, should be put into Appendix C.⁷⁷ The seven illustrations accompanying the text were probably chosen by Christaller.⁷⁸ Apart from the pictures of the author himself on the front page and of Aduanan Apea, none of the pictures that Reindorf had requested in a letter of August 1893 were eventually included in the publication.⁷⁹

Reindorf himself continued to effect corrections and additions even after 1889, the dating of the "Preface." The original title of the book apparently was "Gold Coast and Asante: history told by oral and written narratives."⁸⁰ This title also appears as heading for the Gã manuscript of 1891: "Gold Coast and Asante: Histories told by mouth in particular, and histories that were written down" (see below). The few chapters published by the Basel Mission in the Gã periodical *Christian Reporter* were entitled "Traditional and Historical Records of the Gold Coast."⁸¹ In the course of 1893 Reindorf changed the title of his book from "The Gold Coast and Ashante" to the final *History of the Gold Coast and Asante*.⁸²

Reindorf reportedly made some alterations in the chapters about the Basel Mission and the Wesleyans and sent them to J.P. Werner in London around 1892.⁸³ In a letter of April 1895 to Christaller, Reindorf suggested to move the beginning of chapter 16 to the end of chapter 13.⁸⁴ Reindorf sent a list of several pages with additions and corrections to Christaller in July 1894,⁸⁵ and a list of the former English governors on the Gold Coast in June 1895.⁸⁶

⁷⁷Note by Christaller dated 23 Nov. 1894, encl. in BMA D-20.27,7 (4). Reindorf to Christaller (Sierra Leone, 27 June 1894).

⁷⁸Pictures of "Mr. Richter, p. 212; A. Riis, p. 225; J.G. Widmann, J. Zimmermann, J.G. Christaller facing p. 230; Governor Schöning, p. 269. Cape Coast Town and Castle - facing p. 16. Chief Aduanan Apea of Adwumako and his court - facing p. 186. Christiansborg Castle 1862 - facing p. 340."

⁷⁹BMA D-20.27,7 (1). Reindorf to Christaller (Hebron, 26 Aug 1893), 3. Reindorf had also asked for pictures of "King Taki, the Ashante King, and the bombardment of Christiansborg."

⁸⁰BMA D-20.27,7 (1). *Reindorf to Christaller* (Hebron, 26 Aug 1893), 2.

⁸¹*Christian Reporter* I, 1 (1893) 1, in Fred Agyemang, *Christian Messenger Centenary 1883-1983* (Accra, n.d. [ca. 1983]) between 32 and 33. See also BMA D-20.22. MS on *Christian Reporter* for the Gold Coast, in Gã.

⁸²BMA D-20.27,7 (1). *Reindorf to Christaller* (Hebron, 26 Aug 1893), 2.

⁸³*Ibid.*

⁸⁴D-20.27,7 (6). *Reindorf to Christaller* (Osu, 15 April 1895), 1 and encl. 2. Reindorf's suggestion was not realized in the text but added in the list of "Additions and Corrections" [*History* (1895), 355].

⁸⁵BMA D-20.27,7 (5). *Reindorf to Christaller* (30 July 1894), 5. It was apparently too late to integrate these into the text, and so Christaller added a list of "Additions and Corrections" at the end of the published book [*History* (1895), 354-56].

⁸⁶BMA D-20.27,7 (7). *Reindorf to Christaller* (Osu, 10 June 1895), 1a212:07:46, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms>. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hia.0.0008>

Reindorf chose to write up his research data and to publish his work in English, despite his “poor” use of English, a fact which he freely acknowledged in the “Preface” of the *History*.⁸⁷ Reindorf obviously understood the political value of publishing the *History* in English. He wrote the *History* in a period of growing British authority by conquest and legislation in the 1880s. Ray Jenkins maintained that Reindorf did not conform to the Basel Mission’s literary traditions with publishing in English and that Reindorf’s determination to secure an English-speaking readership was a sign of his intellectual and authorial autonomy. Other African pastors such as David Asante and Nicolas/Niklaus T. Clerk published their research in Akan/Twi or German at the Mission’s expense and under the direct guidance of Christaller and/or the Basel Mission.⁸⁸

V

There is an as yet unpublished Gã manuscript of parts of the *History* in the Basel Mission archives. Its title (translated from the Gã) is “Gold Coast and Asante: History based on oral and written narratives [lit. histories told by mouth in particular, and histories that were written down] comprising a period of 300 years: from the year 1500 to the year 1856.”⁸⁹ The manuscript contains 342 folio pages and is dated “1891” on the title page. This manuscript is a translation of the lost English manuscript. Bartels in 1965 and Odamtten in 1978 suggested that Reindorf’s “entire manuscript” was first written in Gã and then translated into English, but gave no evidence to sub-

⁸⁷*History* (1895), vi.

⁸⁸David Asante (ca. 1834- 13 Oct. 1892) was educated at the Basel Mission school at Akropong (Akuapem), and from 1857 to 1862 at the seminary in Basel. On his return to the Gold Coast he married Martha Lydia Otutua (b. ca. 1845) of Osu. See Sonia Abun-Nasr, *Afrikaner und Missionar. Die Lebensgeschichte von David Asante* (Basel, 2003), *passim*; on David Asante’s stay in Basel see Schlatter, *Geschichte*, 3:97. Among David Asante’s most prominent publications was *Wiase Abasem* (1874) for which J.G. Christaller wrote an introduction. A short anonymous text on Akuapem history found in the estate of the Basel missionary Heinrich Bohner and published in Bernhard Struck, “Geschichtliches über die Östlichen Tshi-Länder (Goldküste). Aufzeichnungen eines Eingeborenen,” *Anthropos* 18(1923), 465-83, has also been attributed to Asante (Wilks, Asante, 181n80). On Basel Mission publication policy see Jenkins, “Gold Coast Historians,” 296, 299-300. Nicolas/Nikolaus Timothy Clerk (1862-1961) was the son of Alexander Worthy Clerk (ca. 1843-1906?), the son of a Christian Jamaican who came to the Gold Coast in 1843 with the Basel Mission. Nicolas T. Clerk was educated at Akropong and Basel, stayed with J.G. Christaller at Schorndorf in 1884-85, and was ordained in Kornthal near Stuttgart. Clerk’s account of the journey made from Anum to the north of modern Ghana was published in *Mitteilungen der geographischen Gesellschaft für Thüringen*. See Hans W. Debrunner, *Owura Nico. The Rev. Nicholas Timothy Clerk, 1862-1961* (Accra, 1965), 16.

⁸⁹BMA D-20.27 (D.I.g.3a). Carl Christian Reindorf, *Gã MS* (1891).

stantiate their hypothesis.⁹⁰ In his “Prefatory Remarks” of June 1895 in Reindorf’s *History*, Christaller unmistakably referred to the Gã manuscript of 1891 by mentioning the “Gã translation of the first half of the [English] work.”⁹¹ This is confirmed by internal evidence: Reindorf’s use of “Protectorate,” a term that described the pre-1874 situation, in the English *History* of 1895, and its omission in the corresponding Gã text respectively may well be regarded as some indication at least that the English text was written shortly before 1874, whereas the Gã text was composed some time after that date, when the southern part of the Gold Coast was formally proclaimed a Crown Colony and from then on called Gold Coast Colony.

Although the Gã manuscript of 1891 is a translation of the original English manuscript, there are numerous words, phrases, and passages that are not found in—or that are different from—the English text of the published *History* of 1895. The differences can be accounted for by assuming that Reindorf added material during the process of translation, or—although less likely—that J.G. Christaller omitted material that was included in the lost English manuscript, but consequently did not appear again in the published version of 1895. The Gã text is often much more precise, includes special terminology and provides ethymological explanations:

1895:99 They ... also constantly assisted in roofing the public court at Akra.

1891:142 They ... also constantly assisted in roofing the public court called Koi/Kwei at Akra.

1895:118 The last power is vested in the companies, who also transfer any difficult cases to the chief and his grandees.

1891:171 The last power is vested in the asafo members, who also transfer any difficult cases to the Akuashong council who holds the military authority, and they also to the lumo [one of many terms for “chief”] and the town citizens.

1895:108 Oboama’s people called Otuopai—living then at ...

1891:155 Oboama’s people called Otuopai = “one does not stop shooting,” – living then at ...

The occasional use of direct speech in the Gã text reflects the performative aspect of oral narration:

1895:88 The king of Namonsi at Mimira was asked to submit

1891:125 The king of Namonsi at Mimira was asked: What does he say? Will he submit?

The Gã text of 1891 provides the modern historian with a wealth of new data. Reindorf inserted a lot of new material, although not in the form of a bulk of data, covering one or more pages but rather by adding words, phras-

⁹⁰Francis L. Bartels, *The Roots of Ghana Methodism* (London, 1965), 73; S.K. Odamtten, *The Missionary Factor in Ghana’s Development, 1820-1880* (Accra, 1978), 225.

⁹¹*History* (1895), viii.

es, or even several sentences into the existing text. Perhaps one of the more exciting additions included in the Gã text is a remark on the famous Asante “Sika Dwa Kofi,” the golden stool of Asante:

1891:104 If people say that Opoku [Ware] took the power of ruling from the chiefs and nobles away, it is all from the advice of Amo Yaw on despotic ruling.... It was him [Opoku Ware] who made the Gold Stool.

The Gã manuscript was probably written around 1889-91, shortly before it was sent to Basel via fellow missionary Jakob Schopf in late 1891.⁹² It was intended as a gift to the Basel Mission by Reindorf, to be used for a revival of the periodical *Christian Reporter* in the Gã language (see below).

According to one of Reindorf's letters of December 1891, as well as the title page, the Gã manuscript originally contained 17 chapters, i.e., 1-3, 5-8, 10-16, 17, 20, and 30.⁹³ Today most of these chapters may be found in the document kept at the Basel Mission archives: yet parts of chapters 8, 10, and 12, and the entire chapters 11 and 20 are missing. The corresponding texts of chapters 8 and 10, however, resurface in published form in the *Gã Kanemo-Wolo III. Reading Book in the Gã or Accra Language* of 1904.⁹⁴ It is likely that they were separated from the other chapters for the preparation of this new edition of the *Reading Book* in the early 1900s, and subsequently not returned to their original file. Chapter 30 of the Gã manuscript contains the corresponding text of chapter 29 of the English *History*, and the last 20 pages of the manuscript are minutes of a Gold Coast missionaries' conference on such topics like circumcision and marriage held in 1895.

For reasons unknown, the end of chapter 3 and chapters 4 and 5 were not sent to Basel with the main bulk of the Gã text in late 1891. The missing part of chapter 3, probably the last 3 pages written in Reindorf's handwriting, was sent to Basel only in February 1894.⁹⁵ In mid-1893 J.G. Christaller asked Reindorf about the whereabouts of chapters 4 and 5, so in October that year Reindorf traveled from his farm to coastal Osu, where he supposedly kept a copy of the whole Gã text. He informed Christaller in December 1893 that he had found chapter 5, but to his surprise had been unable to track down chapter 4 (on early Asante history): “Whether I did not make a copy of that or is in the hands of one of my Brethren for copying I can't tell, but I am sure to find it out, only it is rather disappointing.”⁹⁶ Reindorf, however, promised to immediately send a copy of chapter 5 to Europe via

⁹²BMA D-20.27.8. Reindorf to J.P. Werner, London (Osu, 30 Dec 1891), 1.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴BMA D-I c.30. *Gã Kanemo-Wolo III. Reading Book in the Gã or Accra Language for the Vernacular Schools in the Accra and Adangme Countries, Gold Coast* (3rd ed., 1904), 59-62, 106-18.

⁹⁵BMA D-20.27.7 (3). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 23 Feb 1894), 1.

⁹⁶BMA D-20.27.7 (2). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 14 Dec 1893), 1.

Schopf. While Reindorf was at Osu in October 1893, his son C.J. arrived from London, where he had taken business courses, and Reindorf also attended to the wedding of his daughter “Kate” (Catherine Reindorf, b. 1872).

In February 1894 Reindorf was still at Osu. He reported to Christaller that he could still not find chapter 4, but that he had sent chapter 20 to Europe via Schopf. Chapter 20 is today not included in the Gã manuscript kept at the Basel Mission archives, and it is likely that it had been taken out of the file to be used in a publication such as the *Gã Reading Book*. In the same letter Reindorf apologized to Christaller that he still had not translated and sent the remaining Gã chapters of the *History*, i.e., 9, 17-19, 21-28. Christaller had requested them in order to understand the whole text better.⁹⁷ These chapters, and chapter 4, probably never reached the Basel Mission headquarters in Switzerland.

A structural comparison between the Gã manuscript and the published English version shows that appendix B with the “Asante Royals” of the 1895 *History* is found at the end of chapter 6 in the Gã manuscript, and Appendix C with the “Native Leaders and Officers” of the Katamanso War (1826), together with two pages that appear in chapter 13 of the 1895 edition, and which were used as an introductory text for the list, is found (as chapter 17) on pages 263-80 of the manuscript. Reindorf had the list of the “Asante Royals” and the “Native Leaders and Officers” originally included in the text in his English manuscript, and they were later—together with the list of “European Governors” sent to Europe in June 1895—combined into an appendix (A, B, and C) by Christaller.

A graphological analysis shows that Reindorf did not do the writing alone, but had three assistants, probably Basel Mission catechists who worked under him at Osu at the time. Chapters 1 to 6 of the Gã manuscript of 1891 were published in a periodical of the Basel Mission between 1893 and 1894. This four-monthly paper contained 16 pages, was printed by L. Reinhardt in Basel, and its title (translated from the Gã) is *Reporter for the Gold Coast Christians Speaking the Gã Language*.⁹⁸ Parallel to this so-called *Christian Reporter* in Gã ran another publication called the *Christian Messenger* in the Akan/Twi language.⁹⁹

⁹⁷BMA D-20.27.7 (3). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 23 Feb 1894), 1.

⁹⁸BMA D.II.b.30. *Christian Reporter for the Natives of the Gold Coast Speaking the Ga or Akra Language*. [Shika-Ijshona Kristofoi Ni Wiewo Ga Le A-sanegbalɔ]. Basel, No. 1 (Jan.-April 1893), No. 2 (May-Aug. 1893), No. 3 (Sept.-Dec. 1893), No. 4 (Jan.-April 1894), No. 5 (May-Aug. 1894).

⁹⁹Trutenau, “Basel Mission,” 38, 40. Between 1883 and 1888 Christaller had already published the *Christian Messenger for the Congregations of the Basel German Mission in the Countries of the Gold Coast, W. Africa., with Texts in the Akan/Twi, Gã and English Language, between March 1883 and December 1888*, 31 issues of the *Christian Messen-*

J.G. Christaller, who was the editor of these periodicals, intended to create a literature in the Gã and Akan/Twi languages. His aim was the formation of "christian nations" out of the peoples of the Gold Coast. "A very effective help to this will be that they become united by one common book language," which had to be "cultivated, developed, and refined" so that the African languages could take its place as mediums of communication among Western "educated men."¹⁰⁰ Target audiences of the *Christian Reporter/Messenger* thus were the Western-educated Christian communities in the Akan/Twi- and Gã-speaking areas where the Basel Mission was then operating, European missionaries working in the Gold Coast, retired missionaries, and supporters of the mission living in Europe.¹⁰¹ Interestingly enough, there were not that many religious or evangelizing articles in the *Christian Reporter*. The contributions were mainly of cultural or historical character: stories, folk tales, folklore, and proverbs. News was excluded from the periodical, even though this type of information was in demand by some of the readers.¹⁰² Christaller intended to lay an emphasis on historical articles. He was convinced that a

nation is on the path to civilization when it tries to recollect its own history, when it begins to compare its former and its present state, to disapprove and reject bad observances, and to rejoice in real improvements, to learn from the past, and to progress towards what is better. . . . And so I hope that Gã and Twi Christians also in future days will be glad to read about the conditions and transactions of their ancestors.¹⁰³

In January 1893 the first issue of the *Christian Reporter* in Gã appeared with chapter 1 and part of chapter 2 of Reindorf's *History* under the title "Traditional and Historical Records of the Gold Coast."¹⁰⁴ The second num-

ger came out in 356 pages. In 1885 its circulation was about 3,500 in the Akan/Twi- and Gã-speaking areas. Between 1889 and 1892 publication of this periodical ceased. See Andrew Amegatcher, "The *Christian Messenger*: A History of One of the Publishing Products of the Days of Empire: a Pioneering Newspaper Founded by German Missionaries in the Heart of Ghana," *West Africa* (13-19. January 1997), 57-61.

¹⁰⁰BMA D-20.27.7. Christaller to Reindorf (Schorndorf, 14 July 1893), 1; BMA *Christian Reporter* I, 5 & 6 (Sept. & Nov. 1893), 51.

¹⁰¹Agyeman, *Christian Messenger*, 31.

¹⁰²BMA D-20.27.7. Christaller to Reindorf (Schorndorf, n.d.) 4. There were apparently frequent requests for world news; see Jenkins (1973), 28-29, and Agyeman, *Christian Messenger*, 35-36.

¹⁰³BMA *Christian Reporter* I, 5 & 6 (Sept. & Nov. 1893), 52.

¹⁰⁴*Christian Reporter* I, 1 (1893), 1, in Agyeman, *Christian Messenger*, between 32 and 33. See also its handwritten manuscript form in BMA D-20.22. MS on *Christian Reporter* for the Gold Coast, in Gã.

ber followed in May the same year with the rest of chapter 2 and part of chapter 3. Christaller effected some orthographical and grammatical changes to the Gã manuscript. He also created sub-titles for chapter 3 and intended to make an index with names and places.¹⁰⁵ It seems that at the beginning of 1893 Christaller had already read most of the Gã-manuscript which Reindorf had sent to Basel via Schopf. He mentioned that he had not read chapters 6, 8, 11, 12, 17, and 30 yet.¹⁰⁶ Christaller also cross-checked the Gã manuscript with the English version.¹⁰⁷

In June and July 1893 Christaller expressed his satisfaction about the fact that the Gã periodical could “feed so richly perhaps about 7 years” on Reindorf’s *History*. He also appealed to Reindorf to talk to other African pastors and catechists like Daniel Saba, William Kote, Ludwig Richter, and Nathaniel Mohenu to send in their contributions for the *Christian Reporter*. They should do what they could “to help the cultivation of the Gã language.”¹⁰⁸

Although Christaller understood Gã, he was unable to write it. He therefore relied on others for articles in the *Christian Reporter*. He told Reindorf:

I myself am not able to write articles in Gã; I must be provided with every thing, and I ought to have some variety of pieces (articles) before me, longer ones and shorter ones, that I can select such as are by their length or shortness and by their contents available to fill up the space of the paper in each single numero. E.g. I should be thankful for proverbs in Gã, that are not yet printed, because by them I might easily fill up the voids left at the end of a single paper, or numero.¹⁰⁹

Christaller also admonished Reindorf to carefully read over and correct the Gã texts before they were sent to him. The process by which Christaller himself corrected and edited the Gã manuscript was both thorough and arduous. He reportedly first read the text four times over before he sent it to the printer. When the proof sheets came back, he again read and corrected the text five or six times, “first comparing the manuscript and then sentence by sentence reading over the whole, first correction, revision and superrevision [*sic*].”¹¹⁰ In September 1893 the third issue of the *Christian Reporter*

¹⁰⁵BMA D-20.27,7. Christaller to Reindorf (Schorndorf, n.d.), 6.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷BMA D-20.27,8. Reindorf to J.P. Werner, London (Osu, 30 Dec 1891), 1.

¹⁰⁸BMA D-20.27,7. Christaller to Reindorf (Schorndorf, 14 July 1893), 1-2.

¹⁰⁹BMA D-20.27,7. Christaller to Reindorf (Schorndorf, n.d.), 4.

¹¹⁰Ibid. 6.

was published with another part of chapter 3 and two pages from chapter 5 of Reindorf's Gã version of the *History*. It is probable that the *Christian Reporter* No. 4 appeared later than it was supposed to. It contained the rest of chapter 3 which Reindorf had sent in February 1894 and the rest of chapter 5.

Contributions from other African authors seemingly came in small numbers. In February 1894 Reindorf suggested that Christaller should send a circular letter to all Basel missionaries at the Gold Coast, who in turn should urge the members of their congregations to send in contributions.¹¹¹ In June of the same year Reindorf complained that people did not take much interest in the *Christian Reporter*. He also apologized to Christaller that his "Gã Brethren are doing nothing to assist you old hard-working African's friend."¹¹² In May 1894 the fifth and last issue of the *Christian Reporter* containing chapter 6 appeared. In June 1894 Reindorf sent another unspecified "passage" of the *History* translated into Gã, that Christaller had earlier "required," to Basel via missionary Jakob Schopf. Unfortunately we have no other details about the "passage."¹¹³

In April 1895 Reindorf informed Christaller that he had read the *Christian Reporter* No. 5 containing chapter 6, and he encouraged Christaller to go on with No. 6. He argued that as soon as the English version of the *History* was published and the English readers were telling what the book contained, the *Christian Reporter* would definitely find buyers. He also told Christaller that copies of the proof sheets of the English *History* were already in high demand to decide land cases in Gold Coast courts. By that time Reindorf had apparently translated more of the *History* and the text was being copied. He promised to send the translation to Basel as soon as possible.¹¹⁴

The *Christian Reporter* in Gã was sold for 1 1/2 pence and the Akan/Twi *Christian Messenger* for one penny per copy. In May/June 1895 the missionaries Hermann L. Rottmann (1832-1899) and Johannes Müller (1841-1902) of the Basel Mission Trading Company at Osu wrote a report about the sales of the periodicals.¹¹⁵ The report shows that 800 copies of the Gã and Akan/Twi periodicals had been printed in 1893. The following year 1894 this number was reduced to 600 copies. The missionaries were only

¹¹¹BMA D-20.27,7 (3). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 23 Feb 1894), 3.

¹¹²BMA D-20.27,7 (4). Reindorf to Christaller (Kru Coast, 27 June 1894), 1-2.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹⁴BMA D-20.27,7 (6). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 15 April 1895)

¹¹⁵According to Jenkins (1973:30), H. Rottmann's report and balance sheet dated 16 May 1895, with subscript from J. Müller dated 7 June 1895, are bound into the Gold Coast Correspondence of the Basel Mission for 1895, Vol. I, Nos. 23-25.

able to sell an average of 300 copies of the *Christian Reporter* in Gã and 360 copies of the *Christian Messenger* in Akan/Twi. The missionaries made losses totalling £23 in the course of 1893 and 1894. Rottmann and Müller were quite pessimistic about the future of the periodicals and saw little prospect of improving sales. Müller wrote that “[f]or centuries our people have told folk-tales, and conversed in jokes and friendly abuse. However could we expect them to find interesting a periodical which has so little to tempt them?”¹¹⁶ According to Agyeman, Christaller’s editorial policies, such as the omission of articles in English etc., made the paper unpopular with its African readers.¹¹⁷ There is reason to believe that Christaller had prepared the text for issue number 6 of the *Christian Reporter*. Owing to J.G. Christaller’s unexpected death in late 1895, the publication of the Gã and Akan/Twi periodicals was stopped. No new start was made by the Basel Mission until a full ten years later, when a new series of periodicals in the African languages began.

According to evidence in the correspondence of 1967-68 between Heinrich Bächtold (1901-1988), the late Basel Mission archivist, and H.M.J. Trutenau of the Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana, the Gã manuscript was part of J.G. Christaller’s estate. Minutes of the Basel Mission’s committee of 12 January 1896 maintain that missionary Jakob Schopf, who had just arrived from the Gold Coast, was commissioned to travel to Schondorf to take possession of the estate. Archivist Bächtold did not know if Schopf had immediately passed on the manuscript to the Mission headquarters in Basel, or if he had kept it at home for some time.¹¹⁸

VI

In March 1911 Carl Christian Reindorf informed Jakob Schopf, who, in 1900, had been made the official “Literat für die Gã-Sprache”—i.e., in charge of Gã literary work of the Basel Mission, a position J.G. Christaller had held until his death in 1895—with permanent residence at Basel, of his intention to have his revised Gã version of the *History* printed. Schopf immediately discussed the issue with the Basel Mission printer L. Reinhardt and asked Reindorf to send the whole manuscript first to him before the

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹¹⁷Agyeman, *Christian Messenger*, 42-43.

¹¹⁸Heinrich Bächtold (1901-88) entered the Basel Mission in 1922. He served in Cameroon from 1928 to 1953, and worked as secretary responsible also for the archives of the Mission in Basel from 1953 to 1959. BMA D-20.27.9. Letter by H. Bächtold to H. Trutenau (Basel, 27. Nov 1967); BMA D-20.27.9. Letter by H. Bächtold to H. Trutenau (Basel, 13. Feb 1968). Archivist Bächtold, however, erroneously took the reference to the “Gã manuscript” in the source as meaning the second Gã manuscript of 1912 (see below).

matter could be decided. Reindorf sent it to Basel in February 1912, together with a letter in which he requested a picture of Krobo ruler Odonko Azu (r. 1836-67).¹¹⁹

This Gã manuscript of 261 handwritten folio pages and entitled (translated from the Gã) "Gold Coast and Asante: History of Fifty Years, from 1800 to 1854" is today kept in the archives of the Basel Mission.¹²⁰ Back in 1894/95, Reindorf had already expressed his intention to revise the *History* in a letter to Christaller in July 1894 and in the "Preface" of the published English *History*. He had been particularly eager to revise the chapters on the early migrations and enlarge the sections on Fante history.¹²¹ Although Reindorf's "Preface" in this second Gã manuscript is dated 1895, his "youngest" source material was *Sarbah's Fanti National Constitution*, published in 1906. According to this internal evidence, the year 1906 is the earliest possible date that Reindorf could have finished writing the Gã manuscript.¹²² In his biographical essay on/about his father, C.E. Reindorf suggested that his father had started with the revision of the *History* after 1907.¹²³

In March 1912 Schopf's revised Gã Dictionary, originally written by the prominent Basel missionary and Reindorf's tutor Johannes Zimmermann in 1858, was in its final printing stage, so he asked Reindorf to be patient and that he would read the Gã manuscript in April.¹²⁴ Communication between Reindorf and Schopf was taken up again in August 1812 with a letter from Schopf to missionary Jacob W. Wertz (1868-1945) at Osu.¹²⁵ Schopf want-

¹¹⁹BMA D-20.19.1. Kopierbuch Schopf, 1905-12. Schopf to Reindorf (10 April 1911), 219-20. Schopf was on the Gold Coast as a missionary from 1881 to 1895 and he knew Reindorf personally. Schopf had apparently kept up correspondence with Reindorf as a letter of 1904 shows. BMA D-20.19.6. Kopierbuch Schopf, 1900-6. Schopf to Reindorf (15 Sept. 1904), 362.

¹²⁰BMA D-20.26 (D.I.g.3) Carl Christian Reindorf, *Gã MS* (1912).

¹²¹*History* (1895), v, vii; BMA D-20.27.7 (5). Reindorf to Christaller (Kru Coast, 30 July 1894).

¹²²*Gã MS* (1912), ii; Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*.

¹²³*History* (1966), 16.

¹²⁴BMA D-20.19.1. Kopierbuch Schopf, 1905-12. Schopf to Reindorf (18 March 1912), 227. On the fate of Schopf's unpublished manuscript of the Ga-English dictionary, which is today kept at the Balme Library of the University of Ghana, see H.M.J. Trutenau, "The Ga Dictionary Manuscript in the Balme Library, Legon," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 13(1972), 265-72.

¹²⁵Jakob Wilhelm Wertz (1868-1949) entered the Basel Mission in 1889 and worked as a missionary at the Gold Coast from 1895 to 1917. He arrived on the Gold Coast in December 1895, just after Schopf had left it for good. He was in internment from 1917 to 1918 on the Isle of Man due to World War I, became a traveling secretary for the Basel Mission in Stuttgart from 1919 to 1921, and stayed again on the Gold Coast from 1930 to 1937. He worked as a minister until a call went out for a Gã-speaking Basel missionary to

ed Wertz to discuss the contents of the letter with Reindorf. However, there is no clue as to why Schopf did not address Reindorf himself. Schopf informed Reindorf of the estimated cost for printing and binding and that part of the expenses had to be paid by Reindorf in advance to the Basel Mission trading company on the Gold Coast. Schopf reminded Reindorf of the absence of the text for chapter 24 in the manuscript and included seven pages in his letter to Wertz with detailed critical questions on Reindorf's use of the Gã language and orthography.¹²⁶ On 24 September 1912 Carl Christian Reindorf then sent a letter to Schopf including an extensive list of four pages with additions and corrections for this second Gã manuscript. His suggestions were transferred into the manuscript by Schopf with marginalia and deletions.¹²⁷

There are corrections written with red ink in the manuscript and, according to archivist Bächtold, they were written by a German-speaking person, occasional remarks for the printer proving this statement. Graphological comparison shows that Jakob Schopf was the corrector. There are also few corrections in another unidentified handwriting.¹²⁸ Carl Christian Reindorf, at that time about 70 years old, was helped by catechist Henry T. Hammond, a teacher at the Basel Mission boarding school at Osu, with the writing work and in matters of style.¹²⁹

In May 1914 Schopf was commissioned by the Basel Mission administration with producing an expert opinion about the value of the Gã manuscript. Schopf informed his employers about the editing work he and Reindorf had undertaken in the past two years, and recommended the printing of Reindorf's manuscript:

The MS Gã only covers the history from 1800 to 1854 . . . but it is more detailed and more comprehensive [than the published English *History* of 1895]. I would be glad if it could be printed. It is of value and I advocate that where there is joy in writings [Schriftenfreudigkeit] amongst our natives, it should be encouraged and supported.¹³⁰

go out once more to the Gold Coast in order to help the now independent local Presbyterian Church. Wertz, though getting on in years, responded to the call and went out again to work at Osu from December 1930 until February 1934, and again from April 1935 until August 1937, thereby becoming the last of the Gã-speaking Basel missionaries to work on the Gold Coast. On Wertz's role in the revision of the Gã Dictionary, see Trutenau, "Gã Dictionary."

¹²⁶BMA D-20.19.1. Kopierbuch Schopf, 1905-12. Schopf to Wertz (8 Aug. 1912), 232-41.

¹²⁷BMA D-20.27.7. Reindorf to Schopf (Osu, 24 Sept 1912).

¹²⁸BMA D-20.27.9. H. Bächtold to H. Trutenau, Legon (Basel, 13. Feb 1968).

¹²⁹*Gã MS* (1912), ii.

¹³⁰BMA D-3.3. Korrespondenz Goldküste 1914-17, Gã-Distrikt. Expertise by J. Schopf (15 May 1914), my translation.

But Schopf also referred to the fact that chapter 24 was still missing and that he had informed Reindorf that at least the printing costs had to be paid down in advance by him. In the course of the year 1914 Reindorf sent the remaining chapter to Basel, and turned down an offer by the Basel Mission to buy the book. In August 1814 Christian Kölle (1864-1936), who had just returned from the Gold Coast, approached the Basel Mission Committee regarding the issue.¹³¹ He recommended Reindorf's revised *History* in the Gã language, saying that Reindorf had got "the qualifications to write about the Gold Coast" and that "for the Mission and our endeavours to preserve and support the national language the MS is of a value which should not be underestimated."¹³² Kölle also suggested alternatives for financing the printing. Reindorf should sell a piece of land south of the Basel Mission middle school at Osu. Its value was estimated at about £50 to £60. With the profit of the sale of the land, plus an additional equal amount to be paid in advance by Reindorf, the printing could go ahead. Kölle also raised the question if part of Reindorf's manuscript may be used for the school-books, i.e., the *Gã Reading Book* Part IV.¹³³ At this point of research, it may be assumed that the project collapsed because of financial problems on Reindorf's side, or because the Basel Mission did not appreciate his involvement in Osu political disputes at the time.

This second Gã manuscript is clearly not just a translation of the corresponding chapters of the printed English *History* of 1895. The 1895 edition, however, certainly had served Reindorf as a starting point. Reindorf made great efforts to improve chronology, and bring events—particularly events derived from oral narratives—in line with time. The chapters of the Gã manuscript of 1912 were newly structured, and there are two (almost) complete new chapters on slavery and the slave trade. Reindorf used new available source material to enlarge and alter the earlier version of 1895. He also rechecked sources that he had used for the production of the 1895 text.

¹³¹Christian Kölle (1864-1936) entered the Basel Mission in 1883, and worked on the Gold Coast from 1889 to 1914, where he became one of the leading Gã linguists of his time. Kölle returned to Europe in April 1914, and was placed in charge of a boarding school, the New Higher Commercial School at Calw, and held this post as a commercial school teacher until he was pensioned in 1931. After 1931 he revised Schopf's, *Gã Dictionary*. On Christian Kölle's role in the revision of the Gã Dictionary, see Trutenau, "Gã Dictionary."

¹³²BMA D-3.3. Korrespondenz Goldküste 1914-17, Gã-Distrikt. C. Kölle to Inspector BM (4 Aug 1914), my translation.

¹³³*Ibid.* The letter was also signed by missionaries Immanuel Bellon (1875-1956) and Gustav Arthur Jehle (1874-1957), who were at Osu and supported the idea of the land deal with Reindorf. Bellon entered the Basel Mission in 1894 and worked on the Gold Coast from 1899 to 1918. Jehle entered in 1899 and worked on the Gold Coast from 1900 to 1918.

VII

Dr. C.E. Reindorf and C.J. Reindorf, Reindorf's sons, published a second and revised edition of *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante* in 1950 and 1966 respectively. Reindorf's *History* of 1895 had a very limited edition and was subsequently very soon out of print and very rare. According to Ray Jenkins, work on the revised English edition was soon begun after Reindorf's death in 1917.¹³⁴ The new edition was first published in 1950 by the Basel Mission and printed by Friedrich Reinhardt in Basel.¹³⁵ An identical edition was then published by the Ghana University Press and printed by Browne & Nolan Ltd. and the Richview Press in Dublin in 1966.¹³⁶

In the 1960s and 1970s a new generation of historians increasingly demanded a "new look" at the history of Ghana, avoiding a euro-centric view, promoting the use of oral traditions as source material, etc. As a result, the 1950/1966 edition of Reindorf's *History*, which was much more widely available, was used by most historians.¹³⁷ Sometimes scholars did not even differentiate between the first and the second edition, probably being unaware of differences in content.¹³⁸ In 1975 Ivor Wilks purposely decided to use only the 1966 edition, despite its shortcomings, in his pioneering study of Asante because it was more readily available to readers.¹³⁹

¹³⁴Jenkins, "Impeachable," 90, 97n103, suggested that some revision was under way at least as early as 1921 since E.J.P. Brown, who quoted from both the 1895 edition and from what, thirty years later, was to become the second edition, completed his *Gold Coast and Asianti Reader* in that year. See E.J.P. Brown, *Gold Coast and Asianti Reader* (London, 1929), 1:94-101, 193-95, for extracts from Reindorf.

¹³⁵Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* (Basel, n.d. [1950]). The following "agents" are given on the title page: Basel Mission Book Depot (Kumasi), Scottish Mission Book Depot (Accra), Methodist Mission Book Depot (Cape Coast), Overseas Buyers Ltd. (London) and Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. (London). Inquiries about the printing history of the 1950 and 1966 editions of the *History* have proved unsuccessful.

¹³⁶Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* (Accra, 1966). It was distributed by the Oxford University Press outside Ghana.

¹³⁷See e.g. Adu A. Boahen, "A New Look at the History of Ghana," *African Affairs* 65(1966) 212-22; Robert Addo-Fening, "Asante Refugees in Akyem Abuakwa, 1875-1912," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 14(1973) 61; Francis Agbodeka, *African Politics and British Policy in the Gold Coast, 1868-1900* (London, 1971), 189; Michael A. Kwamena-Poh, *Government and Politics in the Akuapem State, 1730-1850* (London, 1973), 39, 39n referring to Ivor Wilks, "The Growth of the Akwapim State," in Mauny, Vansina and Thomas, eds., *The Historian in Tropical Africa* (London, 1964), 407.

¹³⁸E.g. Adu A. Boahen, "Politics in Ghana, 1800-1874," in Ajayi and Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa* Vol. II (London, 1974) 188, 198-99; J.K. Fynn, *Asante and its Neighbours, 1700-1807* (London, 1971), 57.

¹³⁹Wilks, *Asante*, xv.

A detailed examination of the 1895 edition and the 1950/66 edition shows that a major revision of the original was undertaken. The two authors, mainly C.E. Reindorf, probably revised the text from the late 1920s to the 1940s.¹⁴⁰ The editors of the 1950/66 *History* attempted four major changes in the process of revision:¹⁴¹

[1] The editors tried to eradicate all influences by Christaller or the Basel Mission, perhaps out of anti-German feelings and/or to give the new edition an exclusive touch of Britishness and modernity. Christaller's "Prefatory Remarks" and many of his critical annotations were entirely omitted, which is a distinct loss.

[2] The editors of the 1950/66 *History* used contemporary orthographical conventions.

[3] The editors' concentration on improving style and brevity resulted in a large number of omissions, particularly in chapters 1-7, 19, and Appendix C, where substantial sections were totally removed. References to secondary printed sources or oral traditions, lists of names, African terms, songs, and proverbs simply disappeared. As a result, valuable data and insights into Reindorf's thoughts and methodology were all too often lost.

The editors did not show much interest in the availability of new source materials. There were only two, Ellis' *History of the Gold Coast* and Danquah's *Akan Law and Customs*, of which the latter was not even acknowledged.¹⁴² One of the few useful additions is a biographical essay about his father by C.E. Reindorf. In the 1950/66 edition the list of British officials in Appendix A was continued to 1950, and Appendix B was supplemented by a list of the Gã sovereigns of Accra and the rulers of Akyem Abuakwa.¹⁴³ The list of "Corrections and Additions" at the end of the 1895 edition was hardly incorporated into the text. Certain examples of nationalist sentiment were also inserted into the text.

For the modern historian who wants to use the *History* as a source, the few additions and the many losses in content and in methodology in the 1950/66 edition are seldom offset by any gains in style, precision, or clarity. Unfortunately this second edition was and is far more used than the original.

¹⁴⁰Jenkins, "Impeachable," 123, 125, first erroneously stated that the process of revision started in 1907.

¹⁴¹For a more detailed analysis see *ibid.*

¹⁴²A.B. Ellis, *History of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1893); Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*.

¹⁴³The list of Akyem Abuakwa rulers seems to be identical with the one in *ibid.*, 242. Danquah was a member of the Akyem royal house. See Jenkins, "Impeachable," 142n17.

At a court inquiry in 1976, Samuel Neils Awuletey, secretary to the Aneho stool at Osu, commented on the new edition as follows: “[The 1950/66] revision by his late son Dr. C.E. Reindorf is not reliable at all. He has rather mutilated the monumental work of his late father.”¹⁴⁴

VIII

J.G. Christaller recommended Reindorf’s pioneering work with the following words to the readers in his “Prefatory Remarks:”

here we have a history written by a native who has a warm heart for his country and people and is at home in their language and way of thinking, whereby he could attain to a truer aspect of things and facts than a European who has to gather his information by interpreters.¹⁴⁵

On 27 January 1896 Governor Maxwell, a few days after the conquest of Kumase and the submission of Asantehene Agyeman Prempe to the British, sent a collection of reports on the political situation at Kumase to the secretary of state, Joseph Chamberlain, in London.¹⁴⁶ He enclosed a copy of Reindorf’s new book, “as a special token of respect from the author for himself [Chamberlain] personally on the account of the interest he was evinced in the welfare of the country.” In March 1896 the *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* reached London, and Chamberlain conveyed his personal thanks to Reindorf via Governor Maxwell.¹⁴⁷

Significantly, the only known review of Reindorf’s *History* was written in 1897 by Franz Michael Zahn (1833-1900), leader of the Bremen Mission, that had its one and only mission field on what was to become Togo from 1863 until his death. Zahn had never been to Africa himself, and he was a staunch opponent of German imperialism and a tireless critic of German

¹⁴⁴National Archives of Ghana [hereafter NAG] ADM 5/3/221, Proceedings of the Ga Traditional Council Committee of Enquiry (1975-76) III, 15.

¹⁴⁵*History* (1895), ix.

¹⁴⁶William Edward Maxwell (1842/43-1897) was governor of the Gold Coast from 1895 to 1896, and from 1896 to 1897. Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914) served as colonial secretary from 1895 to 1903.

¹⁴⁷Jenkins (1985), “Gold Coast Historians,” 294, 298-99; PRO CO 96/4790, No. 18. Maxwell to Chamberlain (Camp Kumasi, 27 Jan 1896) and Chamberlain to Maxwell (London, 21 March 1896): “Will Mr. C. [Chamberlain] keep the book [*History*] or get rid of it by sending it to the library? 15.3.96.” “Library! 17.3.96.” These were the Colonial Office Minutes’ in response to the arrival in Whitehall of the copy of the *History*.

colonial thought.¹⁴⁸ Zahn described the *History* as a “momentous and interesting”¹⁴⁹ work of an African. He noted:

Even the author himself makes the book interesting. . . . It must indeed be admitted that important sources of this kind of historiography more easily and richly flow to a child of the country than to a stranger. . . . The main value of the book lies in the fact that he relied on the orally transmitted histories of his people.¹⁵⁰

Zahn clearly regarded Reindorf's work as a “history” and not so much as a source book, and he saw the book as of major significance in historiographical development, a notion that re-emerged only in post-1945 years. He praised Reindorf's attempts at writing “Kulturgeschichte” in some chapters of the *History*. Zahn, however, critically remarked on the style of the text, the absence of a map, and the occasional chronological disorder in the narrative.

There were a few African intellectuals around 1900 who mentioned in their publications that they had read Reindorf's *History*. John Mensah Sarbah (1864-1910) described Reindorf as an “able and well-informed author” and the *History* as a demonstration of the intellectual skills of a worthy “son of the soil.” Sarbah also quoted from chapter 8 of “venerable” Reindorf's work in the *Fante National Constitution* of 1906.¹⁵¹ Samuel Richard Brew Attoh-Ahuma (1863-1921), formerly Samuel Solomon, expressed his view that the *History* was an important source for Gold Coast history. According to Ray Jenkins, Attoh-Ahuma apparently relied heavily on Reindorf for his own prosopographical publications *Sketches of the Lives and Labours of our Great Men* in 1898, *Memoirs of West African Celebrities* in 1903, and for *The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness* in 1911, a compilation of press clippings published in the late 1890s.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸Werner Ustorf, *Die Missionsmethode Franz Michael Zahns und der Aufbau kirchlicher Strukturen in Westafrika: Eine missionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Erlangen, 1989) *passim*; Martin Pabst, *Mission und Kolonialpolitik: Die Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft an der Goldküste und in Togo bis zum Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Munich, 1988).

¹⁴⁹Franz Michael Zahn, “Ein afrikanischer Geschichtsschreiber,” *Petermann's Mitteilungen* (1897), 289, my translation.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 289-90.

¹⁵¹John Mensah Sarbah, “The Gold Coast When Edward IV was King,” *Journal of the African Society* 3(1903/04), 195; Sarbah, *Fante National Constitution*, 51.

¹⁵²S.R.B. Attoh-Ahuma, “Sketches of the Lives and Labours of our Great Men,” *Gold Coast Aborigines* (8 Jan., 5 March, 30 April, 4 June 1898); Attoh-Ahuma, *Memoirs of West African Celebrities* (London, 1903), 25-27, 45-58; Attoh-Ahuma, *The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness* (Liverpool, 1911), 45-58. Cf. Jenkins, “Impeachable,” 91.

The Accra lawyer Arthur Boi Quartey-Papafio (1869-1927), a strong supporter of the Akwashong court and Asere (Kinkā/Dutch Accra) in the sociopolitical contest over status and political authority at Accra in the early twentieth century, intriguingly mentioned Reindorf's work only once in his series of scholarly papers on Gã cultural and institutional history for the *Journal of the African Society* (1910/11, 1911, 1913, 1914, 1920).¹⁵³ In the interwar period several African intellectuals considered the *History* as an important source book for Gold Coast history and relied on it for their own scholarly studies. J.B. Anaman's *Simple Stories from Gold Coast History* of 1919 was clearly influenced by chapter 1 of Reindorf's *History*.¹⁵⁴ E. Joseph Peter Brown (1843-1932) also obtained much material from the *History* for his voluminous *Gold Coast and Asianti Reader* (1929) of which he had completed the manuscript in 1921.¹⁵⁵ J. B. Danquah (1895-1965) also appreciated and made use of the *History* in his *Akim Abuakwa Handbook* of 1928,¹⁵⁶ and J.M. Bruce-Myers, a missionary of Jamestown Accra origin, noted: "Reindorf, an accepted historian of his race, endeavoured and succeeded beyond all others in establishing his authority on the question [of the origin of the Gã people]."¹⁵⁷

Other Gold Coast intellectuals ignored Reindorf's work, however. Neither J.W. de Graft Johnson nor Magnus J. Sampson referred to Reindorf in their publications. In a paper read before the Cape Coast Historical Society in 1935, B.Y. Owusu declared that "the only book to which I have made any reference at all is Dr. Claridge's *History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*, since it is about the best standard work on the subject."¹⁵⁸

Ebenezer Ako Adjei (1916-2002), foreign minister of Ghana under Nkrumah in the early 1960s, apparently used information on the etymology of the toponym "Accra" from Reindorf's *History* in an article on mortuary usages of the Gã in 1943.¹⁵⁹ Intriguingly, Reindorf's *History* was also known and appreciated as source among the Guin/Gen political elite in

¹⁵³A.B. Quartey-Papafio, "Apprenticeship among the Gas," *Journal of the African Society* 13(1914), 415. See also Parker, *Making the Town*, 191n99.

¹⁵⁴J.B. Anaman, *Simple Stories from Gold Coast History* (Cape Coast, 1919), 3-7.

¹⁵⁵Brown, *Gold Coast*, 1, 94-101, 193-95, 212-20.

¹⁵⁶Danquah, *Akim Abuakwa*, 16-21.

¹⁵⁷J.M. Bruce-Myers, "The Origin of the Gas," *Journal of the African Society* 27(1927/28), 167.

¹⁵⁸J.W. De Graft Johnson, *Historical Geography of the Gold Coast* (London, 1929); M.J. Sampson, *Gold Coast Men of Affairs* (London, 1937); B.Y. Owusu, "The Rise of the United Ashanti," *Transactions of the Cape Coast Historical Society* 1(1936), 26; Claridge, *History*.

¹⁵⁹Ebenezer A. Adjei, "Mortuary Usages of the Ga Peoples of the Gold Coast," *American Anthropologist* 45(1943), 84-98.

Togo. A manuscript entitled "Mémoire sur l'histoire de Petit-Popo et du peuple Guin (Mina)" written by Fio Agbanon II (1898-1972) at the request of the "Commission d'études des coutumes du Togo" in 1934, and edited and published in 1991, acknowledged making use of Reindorf.¹⁶⁰

European authors used Reindorf's *History* as a source even more frequently. Matthew Nathan, governor of the Gold Coast from 1900 to 1904, acknowledged his indebtedness to Reindorf, and critically discussed his own and Reindorf's sources in his article on late seventeenth-century Gold Coast history.¹⁶¹ George Macdonald in *Gold Coast: Past and Present* (1898), W.W. Claridge in *History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (1915), and Francis C. Fuller in *A Vanished Dynasty: Ashanti* (1921) drew heavily from Reindorf's *History*, though largely without acknowledging their debt.¹⁶²

In contrast, German writers like Jakob Spieth (1906), Johannes Dahse (1911) and Bernhard Struck (1923) admitted their use of Reindorf.¹⁶³ Struck, who edited an anonymous historical text that he had discovered in the estate of a Basel missionary and whose authorship he ascribed to an Akuapem man, used Reindorf's *History* to cross-check information. He reviewed and appraised Reindorf's "not easily readable" but "interesting" work in two lengthy paragraphs.¹⁶⁴

Robert S. Rattray, the prominent British anthropologist and historian of Asante of the 1920s and 1930s, told his readers about "the rare old book by a native pastor" and freely acknowledged his use of Reindorf's *History*.¹⁶⁵ The same with W.E.F. Ward (1901-97), author of *A History of the Gold Coast* (1948) and *A History of Ghana* (1958), who described the *History* as a valuable source in an article written in 1926. Ward worked as a history teacher at the newly found Achimota College (1924-40), and later as a colo-

¹⁶⁰Agbanon, *Histoire*.

¹⁶¹Matthew Nathan, "The Gold Coast at the End of the Seventeenth Century under the Danes and Dutch," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 4(Oct. 1904/05), 1-2.

¹⁶²For extracts from the *History* see George MacDonald, *The Gold Coast Past and Present* (London, 1898), 14, 31, 58, 158; Claridge, *History*, 1:103, 413; Francis C. Fuller, *A Vanished Dynasty* (London, 1921), viii, 9, 16, 19, 55. Claridge's reliance on Reindorf has earlier been noted by Wilks in his review of Georg Nörregard: *Danish Settlements*, *JAH* 9(1968), 162-63. Macdonald's and Fuller's borrowings have been noted by Jenkins, "Impeachable," 92.

¹⁶³For extracts see Jakob Spieth, *Die Eweer: Schilderung von Land und Leuten in Deutsch-Togo* (Bremen, 1906), 28; Johannes Dahse, "Ein zweites Goldland Salomos. Vorstudien zur Geschichte Westafrikas," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 43(1911), 13, 17-18, 43-44; Bernhard Struck, "Geschichtliches," 469, 477.

¹⁶⁴Struck, "Geschichtliches," 466, my translation.

¹⁶⁵Robert S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (Oxford, 1923), 288, 324-25; cf. Thomas C. McCaskie, "R.S. Rattray and the Construction of Asante History: an Appraisal," *HA* 10(1983), 189.

nial advisor, and he was one of the few British who spoke Akan. In an interview given in 1976 he confirmed to Ray Jenkins that copies of the *History* were rare even at that time.¹⁶⁶

In 1925 C.W. Welman thought that Reindorf's work was "a mine of curious and interesting information."¹⁶⁷ Like the aforementioned English writers, Welman was a colonial government official, in this case Secretary for Native Affairs during the 1920s. It is not surprising, then, that he regarded Reindorf's *History* as an important working tool and obtained information from it for his own study of Peki.¹⁶⁸ After having left his post, Welman edited the *Gold Coast Review*, a treasure trove of historical information, from 1925 to 1928. In an article on the Gã people published in 1927, Welman quoted from the *History* and remarked on Reindorf's text: "[t]his passage requires as much elucidation and comment as a passage of Herodotus, which it somewhat resembles in regard to the large number of significant facts indicated in very simple language within a small compass."¹⁶⁹

The first thorough research into Gã history after Reindorf was the British anthropologist Margaret Field in the 1930s. Field commented on Reindorf's *History* that

[t]his ambitious work is to be praised for what it bravely attempted rather than for what it achieved. . . . He collected a wealth of unsifted material from enormous area and flung it down in a chaotic manner, often contradicting himself. He was an indefatigable collector but did not understand the laborious cross-checking nor the ruthless surgery that must be carried out before tradition can be confidently claimed as history. . . . The account of Gã early history which I am now able to present here is, I believe, as accurate as any such history can be and represents years of work and no little patience.¹⁷⁰

Field thought that Reindorf was too indiscriminate and unsystematic a collector of historical data. The wealth of undigested material was of limited

¹⁶⁶W.E.F. Ward, "Problems of Gold Coast History," *Gold Coast Review* 2(1926), 37-52; Jenkins, "Impeachable," 92; personal communication between Ward and Jenkins, 10 August 1976.

¹⁶⁷C.W. Welman, Foreword to W.T. Balmer, *A History of the Akan Peoples of the Gold Coast* (London, 1925), 7.

¹⁶⁸C.W. Welman, *Native States of the Gold Coast I, Peki* (London, 1925), 4, 7; NAG ADM 11/1/1756, Report on Enquiry into the alleged destoolment of Tackie Yaoboi, Ga Mantse, 1921, by C.W. Welman, 16 July 1921; NAG ADM 11/1/1087, Enquiry into whether Ayikai II (Akanmaji stool) was elected and installed in accordance with Native Custom, by C.W. Welman, SNA, 12 Oct 1921, and List of seized stool regalia, dd 19 Oct 1921.

¹⁶⁹Welman, "James Fort, Accra, and Oyeni Fetish," *Gold Coast Review* 3(1927), 78.

¹⁷⁰Margareth J. Field, *Social Organisation of the Gã People* (London, 1940), 145.

value to her. In 1985, however, Ray Jenkins noted that Field did not look at the *History* and its shortcomings within an appropriate temporal or historiographical context. Her evaluation of Reindorf's work appeared rather "harsh, ungenerous and inaccurate" to him.¹⁷¹

With the academization of African history in the 1950s and 1960s, there was a reappraisal of Reindorf's *History*. In an article of 1952 that advocated the use of African verbal art as a historical source, A.B. Attafua considered the *History* to be more comprehensive than Ellis' (1893) and Claridge's (1915) presentations of Gold Coast history because of the inclusion of constitutional and social history.¹⁷² In the same year J.D. Fage noted that "there is a great deal of fundamental historical work waiting to be done in the Gold Coast alike in the recording and elucidating of oral tradition, . . . Reindorf's 'History,' though old . . . is in many ways an admirable book."¹⁷³

Subsequently Reindorf's *History* was regarded primarily as a source and its author considered as an important figure in early nationalist thought and in the historiographical development of the Gold Coast and Ghana.¹⁷⁴ Francis L. Bartels, who praised the *History* as a "remarkable achievement in the use of the oral tradition" in 1965, was the first author who stressed the role of the Basel Mission in its production: "[e]qually notable was the encouragement given to African leaders of the Basel Mission Church to assist in the production of books in the mother tongue for use in schools and by adult literates."¹⁷⁵ Many post-independence scholars—although they still commended the book—unwarrantedly argued that one of the more salient features of Reindorf's work was its palpable orientation towards the Gã and their history.¹⁷⁶ Some felt that Reindorf had been able only to compile and reproduce cultural and historical data rather than select, evaluate, and cross-check it properly.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷¹Jenkins, "Gold Coast Historians," 340.

¹⁷²A.B. Attafua, "Traditional History," *Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togo Historical Society* 1(1952), 19.

¹⁷³J.D. Fage, "Some General Considerations Relevant to Historical Research in the Gold Coast," *Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togo Historical Society* 1(1952), 24.

¹⁷⁴For the *History* as a source book, see, e.g., Attafua, "Traditional History," 19; Fage, "General Considerations," 24-25; David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana: the Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928* (Oxford, 1963), *passim*; Robert W. July, *The Origins of West African Thought* (London, 1968), 256-57. For Reindorf, the "early nationalist," see, e.g., July, *Origins*, 256-57, and Agbodeka, *African Politics*, viii.

¹⁷⁵Bartels, *Roots of Methodism*, 73.

¹⁷⁶Fage, "General Considerations," 24; July, *Origins*, 256-57; K.Y. Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600-1720: a Study of the African Reaction to European Trade* (Oxford, 1970), xiv-xv.

¹⁷⁷July, *Origins*, 256-57; Irene Quaye [Odotei], *The Gã and Their Neighbours* (PhD., University of Ghana, 1972), viii; M.E. Kropp Dakubu, *Korle Meets the Sea: a Sociolinguistic History of Accra* (Oxford, 1997), 176n8.

Reindorf's dual function as historian and source user vis-à-vis his role as collector of data and source creator (particularly to the modern scholar) has great advantages, but has also led to some confusion in the past.¹⁷⁸ Reindorf's *History* does not make things easy for historians, and poses almost impossible demands because it contains both borrowed material and so-called "primary material," i.e., historical and cultural data that stand in the most intimate relationship to a past event, process, or state as far as is known today.¹⁷⁹ Nathan, one of the first authors who used Reindorf, was exceptionally critical and reviewed and thought about the sources Reindorf himself had drawn his information from. He noted:

Tylleman gives the Danish version of the building of Cape Coast Castle, which differs considerably from those of English [Bosman] and French [Barbot] writers. . . . This is the version [Tylleman's] adopted in his "History" by Reindorf, who appears not to have known Tylleman's book, but to have obtained his information from the work published in Hamburg in 1673, of a Danish chaplain who was at Friderichsburg, near Cape Coast, from 1662 to 1670.¹⁸⁰

Although most post-independence academics were aware that Reindorf had also borrowed from various European documentary sources, they often did not give the text the appropriate source-critical attention it deserved before lifting information from it for their own historical research.¹⁸¹ This resulted in quite a large amount of historical hypotheses that were based on sources that had an incestuous relationship, i.e., both Reindorf and Reindorf's source were cited as evidence for one and the same argument, or sometimes Reindorf, as well as later authors who had borrowed from Reindorf with or without acknowledging him were referred to in order to "prove" or make a particular historical reconstruction plausible.

K.Y. Daaku and Larry Yarak, for example, both referred to Bowdich (*Mission from Cape Coast to Ashantee* [1819] 322), Reindorf's apparent source, and to Reindorf (citing *History* [1966] 14, 59?) for the visit of Dutch official(s) to Kumase around 1701/02. Daaku, however, correctly noticed in

¹⁷⁸Cf. Beatrix Heintze, "Oral Tradition: Primary Source Only for the Collector?" *HA* 3(1976), 48.

¹⁷⁹Cf. Adam Jones, "Decompiling Dapper: a Preliminary Search for Evidence," *HA* 17(1990), 171.

¹⁸⁰Nathan, "Gold Coast," 4.

¹⁸¹See e.g. Bartels, *Roots of Methodism*, 73; Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, xiv-xv; Quaye [Odotei], *Gã*, viii. For an early suspicion of a "relationship" (borrowing) between Reindorf and Ellis, *History*, Claridge, *History*, and Fuller, *Vanished*, see Struck, "Geschichtliches," 469n1.

another instance that "Reindorf's passage on this topic [Akyem policy of naturalisation of war captives in 1740s] reads suspiciously like Römer's."¹⁸² Ronald Atkinson brought up Reindorf, and Reindorf's source, Römer, to elucidate the background of the Agona-Akwamu alliance in the seventeenth century.¹⁸³ In an article on the Birim valley of 1982, D. Kiyaga-Mulindwa referred to both Reindorf and Christian on Akwamu slave trading in the seventeenth century, although Reindorf himself had obtained his information from the above-mentioned Römer, and Christian probably from either Reindorf or Römer.¹⁸⁴ Law and Maier were apparently not aware that Reindorf had obtained the "Benin narrative" and information on the (wrong) number of Asante war prisoners from Römer.¹⁸⁵

Winsnes in one instance failed to see in her otherwise formidable new edition of Isert that Reindorf had borrowed that particular passage from Isert, so she referred to the former as if the *History* were an independent source.¹⁸⁶ In his attempt to reconstruct Akyem history, Affrifah, as a last and more recent minatory example, several times referred to Reindorf, together with other pre- or post-Reindorf evidence. Affrifah dated the death of Asantehene Osei Tutu to 1717 with reference to Dutch archival sources for the Akyem-Asante war and with reference to Bowdich, Dupuis, Reindorf, Fuller, and Fynn for the connection between that war and the Asantehene's death.¹⁸⁷ In fact, Reindorf relied on Bowdich and/or Dupuis for the

¹⁸²Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 69n5; Larry W. Yarak, *Asante and the Dutch 1744-1873* (Oxford, 1990), 97n12.

¹⁸³R.A. Atkinson, "Old Akyem and the Origins of Akyems Abuakwa and Kotoku, 1675-1775," in Schwartz and Dumett, eds., *West African Culture Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives* (New York, 1980), 262, 355. Atkinson cited Reindorf as "n.d., 1895 [sic]:62" although he actually used the 1950/1966 edition of the *History*. He referred to a partial translation of Römer's *Tilforladelig Efterretning om Kysten Guinea* (Legon, 1965[1760], 8) by Kirsten Bertelsen for the Institute of African Studies in Ghana. For a more recent translation see Selena Axelrod Winsnes, *A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea (1760)* by Ludewig Ferdinand Römer (London, 2000).

¹⁸⁴D. Kiyaga-Mulindwa, "Social and Demographic Changes in the Birim Valley, Southern Ghana, c. 1450 to c.1800," *JAH* 23(1982), 75; citing Christian, "Akwamu Remnants in Akim Abuakwa" (B.A., University of Ghana, 1974), 102-06, and *History* (1966), 71.

¹⁸⁵Robin Law, "Trade and Politics Behind the Slave Coast: The Lagoon Traffic and the Rise of Lagos, 1500-1800," *JAH* 24(1983), 328-29, citing Römer (1760), 112-17, and *History* (1966) 21, 41, 47; Donna J. Maier, "Military Acquisition of Slaves in Asante," in David Henige and T.C. McCaskie, eds., *West African Economic and Social History: Studies in Memory of Marion Johnson* (Madison, 1990), 121.

¹⁸⁶Selena Axelrod Winsnes, *Letters on West Africa and the Slave Trade. Paul Erdmann Isert's Journey to Guinea and the Caribbean Islands in Columbia (1788)* (Oxford, 1992), 71n2.

¹⁸⁷Kofi Affrifah, *The Akyem Factor in Ghana's History 1700-1875* (Accra, 2000), 37, citing Bowdich, *Mission*, 233, Joseph Dupuis, *Journal of a Residence in Ashantee* (1824), 231-32, *History* (1966), 66-67, Fuller, *Vanished*, 23, and Fynn, *Asante*, 48-50.

year of the war, although the rest of his narrative appears to be original. Fuller, and probably also J.K. Fynn, borrowed from Reindorf. For the Assin-Asante conflict before and after 1800 Affrifah cited an English archival source published in Metcalfe, Meredith, Hutton, Cruickshank, Reindorf, and Ward.¹⁸⁸ A comparison of these texts demonstrates that Reindorf's account was based on Cruickshank, who in turn had borrowed from Meredith and/or Hutton.

Every scholarly work certainly contains its share of errors, but the above examples clearly illustrate that the use of a work like Reindorf's *History*—as indeed any source material—requires a critical attitude and careful and detailed attention. On the other hand, scholars might also be over-critical and dismiss original material as forgery or borrowing, as in the case of Winsnes, who recently remarked that in discussing the Akyem-Akwamu war of 1727-30 Reindorf “merely paraphrased” Römer.¹⁸⁹ In fact, Reindorf did make use of Römer, but a close reading of his account demonstrates that he included information from oral sources as well.

Many of Reindorf's historical interpretations have been retold by Ghanaians since its publication in 1895. This phenomenon of “extraneous material, usually from printed sources, [being] incorporated into the tradition,” has been termed “feedback.”¹⁹⁰ Some of the most notable and tenacious current “traditions” are those of the Gã provenance from the east (Benin narrative) and the Karamansa of Elmina/Fetu narrative.¹⁹¹ Since such material soon becomes indistinguishable in form from original oral elements in a narrative, historians should be careful never to assume that an oral historical nar-

¹⁸⁸Ibid. 105, citing G.E. Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History 1807-1957* (Legon, 1964) 7-12, Henry Meredith, *An Account of the Gold Coast of Africa* (London, 1812) 132-33, William Hutton, *A Voyage to Africa* (London, 1821) 337, Brodie Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa* (London, 1853) 1:chap. 4, *History* (1966) 138-39, and Ward, *History*, 148. Affrifah (ibid. 107) similarly based his evidence on Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years*, I:92-93, Ellis, *History*, 123, *History* (1966) 153, and Claridge, *History*, I:263, without being aware of their inter-relationship. Both Ellis and Reindorf had obtained their information from Cruickshank, and Claridge - as above-stated - borrowed from Reindorf. In another instance Affrifah (ibid. 71 n27) correctly suspected that both Reindorf and Danquah, *Akim Abuakwa*, “seem to have based their views on Römer.” For another recent example of this kind of confusion of sources, see John Kwadwo Osei-Tutu, *The Asafoi in the History and Politics of Accra (Ghana) from the 17th to the mid-20th Century* (Trondheim, 2000) 28.

¹⁸⁹Winsnes, *Reliable Account*, 197 n33.

¹⁹⁰David Henige, “The Problem of Feedback in Oral Tradition: Four Examples from the Fante Coastlands,” *JAH* 14 (1973), 223.

¹⁹¹Winsnes, *Reliable Account*, xxiv; David Henige, “Kingship in Elmina Before 1869: a Study in ‘Feedback’ and the Traditional Idealization of the Past,” *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 14(1974), 501-504.

rative found in collections, or as evidence in court cases, contains no such adulterations. Some of Reindorf's accounts also "fed back" into the "traditions" of the Guin/Gen of Togo.¹⁹²

Reindorf's *History* became a very important source and manual in court cases and disputes about political authority, status, land ownership, identity, succession, and jurisdiction throughout the twentieth century. These conflicts and negotiations were triggered by the rising value of land, particularly in and around Accra since the late 1870s, and the British policy implemented roughly between 1895 and 1910 of establishing an official hierarchy of "chiefs" throughout the Gold Coast colony, which was designed to minimize the number of local authorities who were meant to have direct communication with the colonial government and to create a sociopolitical order out of what the British perceived as chaotic African conditions.¹⁹³ In this context, invocations of history served as powerful arguments supporting particular positions, and history—the way identities, ownerships and relationships, succession rules, and institutions had been in the past—was subsequently hotly contested and fought over. Both Africans and Europeans, acting out of beliefs and interests of their own, used history as a weapon in conflicts over resources and political authority.

Given this background, it is not difficult to understand why disputants in court brought to bear every possible shred of historical evidence they could muster in support of their claims. The political elite and aspirants to office told history in order to legitimize the extent and depth of their authority. The Gã and others plunged themselves into a struggle over who would control the past. In the course of a legal conflict, actors constructed arguments about the past, and they did so based not on the way things had been, but on how they wanted them to be.¹⁹⁴ They also appropriated histories that grounded their claims to particular tracts of land by showing that they had "traditionally" venerated their ancestors on that land.¹⁹⁵ This struggle over history probably began long before the arrival of the British. Negotiations and conflicts over history in precolonial times were dynamic verbal and non-verbal cultural activities that ranged from gossip to storytelling, from

¹⁹²Agbanon, *Histoire*, 5-6.

¹⁹³Kimble, *Political History*, 462-69; Agbodeka, *African Politics*, 113-22; Henige, "Problem of Feedback," 224.

¹⁹⁴Henige, "Problem of Feedback," 224, and idem., "Akan Stool Succession under Colonial Rule: Continuity or Change?" *JAH* 16(1975), 293; Kridtin Mann, "Interpreting Cases, Disentangling Disputes: Court Cases as a Source for Understanding Patron-Client Relationships in Early Colonial Lagos" in Falola and Jennings, eds., *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed* (Rochester, 2003), 202.

¹⁹⁵See e.g. NAG ADM 11/1/1088, Enquiry into the Action of the Asere Mantse in going to Okai Kwei, by B. Crabbe, DC, n.d. (Sept 1920).

town meetings to diplomatic encounters, and from ritual ceremonies to court cases. Moreover, the privilege of giving evidence in and advising colonial courts on the content of “custom” gave male elders much more power to shape history and genealogies in their own interests than they had had in the precolonial period. This subject definitely needs further investigation, as the existing literature on the Gã and Akan do not delve into it.

In their attempt to clarify the local political hierarchies and institutions and to handle the increasing number of court cases among the Gold Coast and Accra political elite, the British created the Secretariat for Native Affairs (SNA) in 1902.¹⁹⁶ Subsequently they also established various “Commissions of Enquiry” chaired by the SNA to adjudicate the scores of disputes between “chiefs” and elucidate their relative positions and rules of succession. Legal disputes also stimulated historical and anthropological research on the side of the British. Among the various measures for associating academic research and colonial administration were the establishment of the Anthropological Department in Ashanti, the activities of anthropologists like Rattray and Field, and in 1917 the opening of the School of Oriental Studies at the University of London (in 1938 to include African Studies).¹⁹⁷

Reindorf’s *History* became an important piece of evidence in the Accra courts even before it was printed, as the following extract from one of Reindorf’s letters of April 1895 shows:

He [Nii Taki Tawia] knowing what I was doing all the while, called on me a few days ago to spare him a part of the sheets about the war between the Accras and Akwamus in 1733. Because there is a certain dispute about the land between the Accras and Asaaman people. The King of James Town says that it was Wetse Kojo who fought against the Akwamus etc.etc. That Chap. 6 treating about that war is still in the King’s hand as people of both parties with the Chief Justice are leaving Town tomorrow for inspection. Such facts as well as referred disputes about lands, rightful heirs to stools etc. will surely call the attention of our poor people to the study of the history of their Country. There was a similar case in Court last year between the Nungowas and Tema people about land near Aasabi, which originally belong to Tema people. The case was decided in favour of the Nungowas, but afterwards reversed in favour of the Temas. If people study their own history or the Govt. too know all

¹⁹⁶Henige, “Problem of Feedback,” 224.

¹⁹⁷T.H. Von Laue, “Anthropology and Power: R.S. Rattray among the Ashanti,” *African Affairs* 75(1976), 35.

such cases, things may not be too troublesome to either the Govt. or the people.¹⁹⁸

This case in which the “King of James Town” in Accra was involved had its origin in the legal dispute “Edward Solomon (alias Kofi Oku (r. 1870-82), of James Town) v. Noy (of Asere)” over land in 1880. The judgment given in favour of James Town or, rather, Alata became a reference point for subsequent litigation. The Alata strategy had been based on the claim that they, although being of immigrant origin, had held land through the Gã customary principle of “ownership by continuous occupation and settlement.”¹⁹⁹ Following a series of court cases involving Alata of James Town, the above-mentioned passage from Reindorf's *History* was taken as evidence that the Alata founder had distinguished himself in the Akwamu war of 1727-30. The refurbished memory of Alata's role in past wars reinvigorated its status as rightful member of the Gã community. The relationship between war, citizenship, and land ownership was very explicit in the judgment given in the case of “Anege Akue v. Kojo Ababio” dating from the 1900s: “[w]hen the Akwamu war broke out, Wetse Kojo fought hard, and drove away the Akwamus, and they all [Sempe and Akumaje] made him their Mantse, and he was called the King of James Town. All the lands in James Town were put under his stool.”²⁰⁰

This extract from the ruling of the judge reads suspiciously like a passage from Reindorf's *History* (1895:29). The successive Alata leaders Solomon alias Kofi Oku (r.1870-82), George F. Cleland (r.1882-87) and Kojo Ababio (r.1892-1939) thus managed to reinforce the superior position of Alata in the contested “James Town Union” vis-à-vis Sempe and Akumaje by their success in land litigation. On the other hand, the failure of Sempe and Akumaje in their claims drove them into closer alliance with Kinkã/Dutch Accra, particularly Asere, who were equally alarmed by “both the economic and political implications of the successes made by Alata in the courtroom.”²⁰¹

Reindorf's wide historical knowledge, as expressed in his monumental *History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, was soon very much in demand at courts. In 1902 Reindorf himself was called upon to testify in a conflict over land between Osu and La. He apparently also drew up historical arguments for the lawyers Edmund Bannerman and Henry Plange, who represented Osu.²⁰² Among numerous political disputes, Reindorf's *History* also lay at

¹⁹⁸BMA D-20.27,7 (6). Reindorf to Christaller (Osu, 15 April 1895), 2.

¹⁹⁹Osei-Tutu, *Asafoi*, 130.

²⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 131.

²⁰¹*Ibid.*

²⁰²NAG SCT 2/6/2. High Court Records, Accra, Judgement Book. Vol. 2 Part 1. Labadi vs. Christiansborg (1902) 41-52, cited in John Parker, “Mankraloi, Merchants, and Mulattos: Carl Reindorf and the Politics of ‘Race’ in Early Colonial Accra” in Jenkins, *Recovery*

the center of a long and tenacious litigation surrounding the Agona paramount stool office.²⁰³ In 1931 the Agona Nyakrom stool successfully challenged the paramountcy of the Agona Nsaba stool with the assistance of Reindorf's account of the Fante/Gomoa conquest of Agona in the 1720s. The Nyakrom party could thus prove the antiquity and seniority of the Nyakrom dynasty. Nsaba Agona was, however, reconstituted as a paramount stool in 1945 and after continuing litigations both stools were recognized as paramount stools by the National Liberation Council in 1968.²⁰⁴ The *History* was a very important instrument in the detailed and lengthy "Proceedings of the Gã Traditional Council Committee of Enquiry" in 1975 and 1976.²⁰⁵

In the colonial context, courts not only made a great impact on the distribution of economic and political power, but also on the shaping of historical interpretations and on the perception of African history at large. By their interpretation of relationships, political hierarchies, succession principles, and identities they created what was loosely termed "customary law."²⁰⁶ Among the issues to emerge in the course of a comprehensive colonial government inquiry into the Gã constitution in October 1907, for example, was the definition of "authentic" Gã custom and constitutional procedure.²⁰⁷ The British believed that they needed to preserve "traditional" hierarchies, relationships, and identities except when they were repugnant to "justice, equity, and good conscience."²⁰⁸ The underpinning ahistorical notion of colonial administrators and judges was that African institutions were "immutable tradition." The outcome of court cases and government inquiries silenced competing historical narratives and shaped what was to be accepted as "authoritative" history. As some representations of past identities, relationships, and institutions predominated in courts and public debates and were enshrined in colonial legislation, Gã and Akan 'customary law' respectively was invented and reinvented as needed. The support of one particular version of history allowed British

ery, 41; NAG ADM 11/1/1139, 'The Constitution of the Jurisdiction of the Town of Christiansborg,' by Yeboa Kwamli, Manklalo (12 Oct. 1910), 5.

²⁰³See e.g. NAG ADM 11/1/1088, Enquiry into the Action of the Asere Mantse in going to Okai Kwei, by B. Crabbe, DC, n.d. (Sept 1920); NAG ADM 11/1/1756, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Tribal Organisation of the Gas, 1907.

²⁰⁴For details see Henige, "Akan Stool Succession," 293-94.

²⁰⁵NAG ADM 5/3/221, *Proceedings of the Ga Traditional Council Committee of Enquiry* (1975-76), 3 volumes.

²⁰⁶Osei-Tutu, *Asafoi*, 164.

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 171.

²⁰⁸Mann, "Interpreting Cases," 202.

officials even to argue that they were righting a wrong, for they were returning legitimate "traditional" authority to power. This development stood in sharp contrast to Reindorf's perception of history, his pluralistic approach to sources and the reconstruction of history, and his views on the functions of history. Ironically, Reindorf's *History* itself was soon regarded as an "authority in . . . Law Courts."²⁰⁹

In fact, Reindorf attempted to demonstrate that the institutions of the Gã, Akan, and Ewe had always been dynamic historical formations shaped by particular processes of economic and sociopolitical change. The "customary law" that evolved in the post-1895 context bore little relationship to that idea. It suggested a continuity, order, and rigidity that in practice had never existed in precolonial times. Gã and Akan sociopolitical culture was characterized by diverse succession patterns, changing political hierarchies, fluid identities, trans-cultural contacts, and networking.²¹⁰ While Reindorf advocated that Gold Coasters study history in order to find strategies for the future, to embrace their cultural heritage with self-confidence, and to look forward to a world of economic and educational development and reformed African governments (albeit under the British), the ideas of written "native customary laws" and "authoritative histories" not just ossified Gold Coast history, but also petrified institutions and inhibited change and debates on history even beyond independence.

Today Reindorf is considered as one of the great personalities of Ghana's history because of the *History of the Gold Coast and Asante*. As such, a short portrait of his life appeared in Isaac Ephson's *Gallery of Gold Coast Celebrities*. In the memory of the people he is not so much a Basel Mission pastor as a prominent historian and intellectual:

One of the African patriots of the last century whose works are still of benefit to this country was the Rev. Carl Christian Reindorf of Osu, Accra. His many-sided activities in spreading the Gospel, defending his country in war, practising medicine, writing the first history of the Gold Coast, and translating the Bible into the Gã language, easily gain him a place among Gold Coast celebrities. . . . Perhaps his greatest work was publishing the first history book of the Gold Coast.²¹¹

²⁰⁹*History* (1966), iii: "Dedication by C.J. Reindorf."

²¹⁰See Henige, "Akan Stool Succession," 286, 290; Mann, "Interpreting Cases," 202.

²¹¹Isaac Ephson, *Gallery of Gold Coast Celebrities* (Accra, 1969), 56.

IX

Adam Jones noted that the context of historical sources for West Africa can be compared to the situation for the European Middle Ages. Source material is quite rare and “precious” and the source-texts must be carefully and critically analyzed.²¹² Jones also expressed his regret that this fact had not been considered enough in the past forty years of academic West African historiography:

West African historians have not critically enough looked at their sources as regards plagiarism, falsified travel accounts, stereotypes or ideologies and have equally not shown enough respect to the same as regards exact wording, orthography or content. . . . West African history will only achieve lasting success if the sources per se are conceded higher priority. . . . To make West African historiography truly advance, the publication of good source-editions must be acknowledged as scientific achievement equal in value to other work.²¹³

The new edition of the *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* basically aims at presenting Reindorf’s pristine original texts—the Gã versions of 1891 and 1912 and the English *History* of 1895—reproduce them exactly and faithfully in all details, and preserve their characteristics and essence. Reindorf’s Gã texts are literary and historical monuments of unique psychological and political value to education in Ghana and the African-American diaspora because the readers receive at first hand documentation put together by an African in an African language. In multi-ethnic Ghana special attention must be paid to the minorities and to the needs of the different language groups which make up its population. In multilingual Accra, in fact, after centuries of surviving by absorbing non-Gã speakers and adapting to changes, the Gã language actually seems to be declining.²¹⁴ The publication of Reindorf’s Gã manuscripts of the *History* could contribute to a heightened awareness of the fragile position of a minority and its language.

²¹²On source editing see David Henige, “Guidelines for Editing Africanist Texts for Publication,” *HA* 18(1991), 379–87; Adam Jones, *Zur Quellenproblematik Westafrikas, 1450–1900* (Stuttgart, 1990); Mary-Jo Kline, *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (Baltimore, 1987); and Thomas Spear, “New Approaches to Documentary Sources,” in Falo-la/Jennings, *Sources and Methods*, 169–72.

²¹³Jones, *Zur Quellenproblematik*, 177–78, my translation. See also *ibid.*, 178–185. Also see Jones, *Raw, Medium, Well Done: a Critical Review of Editorial and Quasi-Editorial Work on Pre-1885 European Sources for Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1986* (Madison, 1987), and Fage, *Guide*.

²¹⁴Kropp Dakubu, *Korle*, 11.

In 1975 L.H. Ofosu-Appiah in his book about Casely-Hayford ironically commented on the destiny of Reindorf's Gã manuscripts that the "Gã version lies in Basel, and has never been published, for it is in keeping with our ideas about educational advancement that illiteracy in one's own mother-tongue is greeted with an indulgent smile."²¹⁵ The Gã manuscripts are an outstanding literary product and a treasure trove for linguists, filled with innumerable old Gã words. Reindorf himself took great pains in finding as many old Gã words as possible and integrate them into his work.²¹⁶ A reference to current Gã dictionaries confirms this. Moreover, in the Gã texts Reindorf did great etymological work which is worth revealing. Their publication will help researchers of historical linguistics to access the material easily, especially African and African-American scholars and students. The Gã texts also help historians in understanding the English text by translation and retranslation into the Gã and the Akan languages respectively of ambiguous words in the English version. They permit the reader to make alternative readings and translations, and/or to evaluate the validity of any hypotheses the editor might suggest.²¹⁷

Language is non-finite and always changing, just as the circumstances of its use vary.²¹⁸ The publication and a first, provisional and surely yet incomplete, analysis of the Gã manuscripts offer an important platform for moving forward in Gã linguistic research and in Reindorf studies in general. In 1998 Thomas Bearth remarked that "there is a large and promising avenue for further study which would necessarily have to unite the competences of the linguist and the historian and might concentrate in particular on the Gã manuscripts of the *History*."²¹⁹ The analyzed and annotated texts of both Gã manuscripts may—transcribed into modern orthography as presented in the new edition—also serve as a basis for educational material in modern Ghana. Reindorf's Gã texts must be considered as unique as regards size and age in Gã literary tradition (apart from Bible translations of course), and they may well turn out to be unique in a West African or even a sub-Saharan context.

The Gã manuscript entitled "The Gold Coast and Asante" (1891) must be considered a primary source, as it is a translation of the lost English manuscript of the *History* and it is not identical with the published English text of 1895. Thus the Gã text is presented on the left side of a double page while

²¹⁵L.H. Ofosu-Appiah, *Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford: the Man of Vision and Faith* (Accra, 1975), 10.

²¹⁶BMA D-27.7 (1). Reindorf to Christaller (Hebron, 26 Aug. 1893).

²¹⁷Cf. Jones, "Zwei indigene Ethnographien," 36.

²¹⁸Kropp Dakubu, *Korle*, 16.

²¹⁹Thomas Bearth, "J.G. Christaller: a Holistic View of Language and Culture—and C.C. Reindorf's *History*" in Jenkins, *Recovery*, 97.

the corresponding English text of the *History* of 1895 is presented on the right side. The English text of 1895—albeit different—can very well serve as a “translation” of the 1891 Gã text. This is made possible by the fact that both texts emerged from a lost English manuscript, and the structure and syntax of both texts are basically the same. In the new edition, additions from the Gã text are translated and inserted in italics into the English text of 1895, and all other differences are indicated in the annotations. The presentation of the Gã text of 1891 and the corresponding English text of 1895 side-by-side on facing pages allows scholars to compare the contents of the two versions of the *History* directly. Moreover, the Gã manuscript of 1891 does not contain all chapters of the 1895 English text. Those parts of the published English *History* that are not included in the Gã manuscript are presented separately in the new edition. The 1895 English edition is very rare—a copy does not even exist in the British Library.²²⁰ The other Gã manuscript, “History of the Gold Coast and Asante of fifty years, 1800-1854” (1912), which contains a largely revised and extended version of the earlier *History* (1891, 1895), is presented with the Gã text on the right side and the translated English text on the left side of a double page.

The above description of the presentation of Reindorf’s texts in the new edition is the product of a lengthy dialogue and decision-making process with fellow scholars and publishers. One might argue for conflating the three texts of 1891, 1895 and 1912, omitting the Gã texts, and presenting a consolidated English text with material relevant to the historian using the *History* as a source. This would inarguably mutilate Reindorf’s texts on a philological level, and would massively decrease readability, since Reindorf’s *History* is difficult to use and read even in its present state. It is very dense in content, with innumerable names of people and places, and there are ambiguities and occasional chronological “disorder.”

Or one might think it practical to extract and omit Reindorf’s borrowings from European writers. However, I have refrained from omitting these on the grounds that most of them are not verbatim borrowings, but have been changed on a minor or sometimes larger scale by Reindorf (and thereby been “upgraded” and made interesting to modern scholars). As a result, it is not always clear where borrowing ends and an original text begins. Another reason for preserving borrowings is that their omission would rob historians of the opportunity to ask questions as regards the intellectual process. As

²²⁰The use of paragraphs sometimes differs in the Gã text of 1891 and the corresponding English text of 1895. In accordance with the rule that related subject matter should not be broken up by a paragraph, the text that adhered less to this principle has been amended by either breaking it up into paragraphs or by running together the paragraphs. Changes like these are made transparent with a reference in the annotation.

Henige and others have shown, even borrowings have historical value and scholars might choose to study them in the context of historiography and intellectual history.²²¹ The publication of the Gã texts of 1891 and 1912 gain with the inclusion of the 1895 English text because historiographical aspects and Reindorf's methods become more transparent. Reindorf's *History* was re-edited in the 1950/60s with a very unsatisfactory result for modern scholars, and the same mistake should not be made twice, nor a second chance missed. The inclusion of the Gã texts in the new edition represents a courageous new approach to publishing African sources because the Gã text is in fact the primary source and it will clearly signal that the publishers—in the spirit of Reindorf himself—have done away with the age-old imposition of European and American ideas. It expresses a respect for African languages and people.

X

A modern source edition owes readers an informed and wide-ranging discussion of circumstances and contexts that attended the creation and production of the texts chosen to be edited. The new edition of Reindorf's *History* contains a comprehensive introduction by myself. The first chapter serves as a detailed report on the life of Carl Christian Reindorf in order to gain insight into the personal, social, and economic contexts in which the *History* was written and in order to “understand” its author. Here, Reindorf's family, his educational background, and his multi-faceted professional career are introduced. The biography, together with occasional information on important contemporary political developments in Accra, provide the building blocks for an analysis of Reindorf's approach to history and historiography in the next chapter. Apart from discussing his methodology and sources as an effort to contribute to the general debate on the nature of African historiography, the second chapter describes the various “versions” of the *History* and their making in detail: the printed English version of 1895, the second revised edition of 1950/66, and the two Gã manuscripts of 1891 and 1912 respectively. This second introductory part also attempts to offer insights into Reindorf's motivation for writing, his sources and methodological approach, and the reception and readership of the *History*. A third chapter about important aspects of the new edition concludes an editorial introduction. Whereas the previous chapters may not be required by readers who consult the edition for something in particular, it is advisable to

²²¹Henige, “Guidelines,” 381; Jones, *Zur Quellenproblematik*, 171, 190; Jan Vansina, “The Many uses of Forgeries: The Case of Douville's Voyage au Congo,” HA 31(2004), 369.

consult this section, which enlists editing features like the structure of the text, special signs, etc., and my principles on transcription and translation.

The new edition of Reindorf's *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* aims at scientifically annotating the text of the rare English edition of 1895, and the so far unpublished Gã texts of 1891 and 1912 so as to enable the modern historian to use it as source and guide to Ghana's past. As noted, Reindorf's *History* in its present state is difficult to use and read. The participants of the international Reindorf Conference held at Basel in 1995, which was organized by the Basel Mission and the University of Basel on occasion of the centennial anniversary of the *History*, noted that "a proper scholarly edition of the *History*, with a powerful index, would greatly facilitate modern work with Reindorf's text."²²² The wish for a new edition of Reindorf's *History* among the community of researchers on Ghanaian history was first expressed by Ray Jenkins in the 1970s:

Perhaps I can close by suggesting some ways in which these difficulties could be alleviated. Obviously the first requirement is that an undisguised reprint of *History* 1895 be published. This could incorporate some of the more useful appendages to *History* 1966 such as C.E. Reindorf's biographical sketch and there is no reason why it could not be a scholarly edition, including investigation of Reindorf's use of printed sources Most of all, though—and regardless of whatever else is done—it must be a true rendering of Reindorf's work.²²³

The new edition of the *History* therefore includes annotations and an extensive index to the whole text in order to facilitate reading and working with the *History*. New sub-chapters are inserted into Reindorf's sometimes quite badly arranged text to make access to information easier for the reader. The original pagination of all the texts is inserted in square brackets and, in the annotations, references to the various versions of the *History* invariably provide the original pagination.

Additions and corrections to the English text of 1895 suggested by Reindorf in letters to Christaller between 1891 and 1895 have been inserted into the text of the new edition and indicated in the annotation. Christaller, Reindorf's editor in Germany, was not able to include these corrections in the text, and only added a list of "Additions and Corrections" at the end of the book (*History* [1895], 354–56). Most additions and corrections to the second Gã manuscript (1912) contained in letters by Reindorf to the Basel mission-

²²²Paul Jenkins, "Introduction," in Jenkins, *Recovery*, 17.

²²³Jenkins, "Impeachable," 94.

ary Schopf in Basel during the period 1912-14, were inserted and noted down by Schopf himself on the manuscript. These changes to the original text are also indicated in the annotations. In the 1895 text of the *History*, additional material from the Gã text of 1891 is translated and directly inserted into the English text in italics. The few additions in the 1950/66 second English edition are designated as such and included in the annotations. Reindorf's sons, the editors of the 1950/1966 *History*, omitted considerable important original material. Since Ray Jenkins has already indicated the major omissions, they are not referred to in the annotations.

The scholarly apparatus of the English text provides contexts and information on the writing process. It also attempts at placing Reindorf's account in a historical and historiographical context and draws attention to Reindorf's methodology, the sources he used, and any recent research on a particular topic. It includes explanations on particular Gã terms, names of people, places, and plants. The notes to the English text also refer to parts in the corresponding Gã text that are ambiguous and difficult to translate, or to Gã terms that have no exact counterpart in English. Occasionally literal translations—where deemed interesting for the reader—of the corresponding Gã text are given. The annotations of the Gã texts concentrate on the detailed description of the manuscript handwritings and the corrections, insertions and other margins by Christaller et al. and on linguistic aspects of Gã. The latter include archaic and rare words, or words not likely to be heard in “normal” Gã speech.

The placing of notes has raised problems because Reindorf's texts are imperfectly organized and events and hundreds of names are mentioned in widely dispersed locations. Notes to items which occur both in the editor's introduction and in Reindorf's texts are kept to a minimum in the former and are more elaborately dealt with in the latter. Within Reindorf's text, notes are generally placed where an item occurs for the first time. In cases when an item is mentioned two or more times, and the first time is out of context in that particular part of Reindorf's text, then only a minimal note is provided there, and a more detailed reference is made when the same item is part of an argumentative focal point of the text. In general, within paragraphs and sentences a reference is kept close to the item it refers to in order not to obscure its content. Only limited cross-references are supplied and for detailed cross-referencing the reader can consult the extensive index.

Determining the quality (amount of details, comprehensiveness) and quantity of the notes was a difficult task. The former was focused on the understanding of Reindorf's text, assuming a “level of ignorance” of the reader which is “slightly higher in theory than in practice.”²²⁴ The latter was

²²⁴Henige, “Guidelines,” 385. See also Winsnes, *Reliable Account*, xxviii, on this particular topic.

largely determined by practical aspects and especially by the amount of time available for writing. However, the annotations concentrate on the African aspects of the text, and happen to be a bit more detailed in those parts of the text that focus on the Gã people. This is solely due to practical reasons as I have done some research on Gã history and culture during the last twenty years and had already been in possession of quite a large amount of material from the outset of this project. Great efforts have been made over the past five years to make up for this deficiency and I have spent a large amount of time uncovering material relating to the Akan- and Ewe-speaking people in order to use it for the corresponding notes in the scholarly apparatus. However, producing a comprehensive annotation for a massive work like Reindorf's must be considered as a never-ending story and would require many more years than I have at my disposal.

XI

From the outset of the project, one of the major aims of the new edition was to provide insights into Reindorf's sources and his methods, i.e., the way he used the sources and how he presented the data as text. Unfortunately most of Reindorf's informants and written sources have hitherto remained anonymous. In the *History* he very rarely acknowledged the books he used or the informants he obtained data from and often just noted "tradition says that ..." In order to gain insight into the way Reindorf accommodated evidence derived from oral narratives and other types of verbal or non-verbal cultural expressions and to assess the amount of text material that was derived from European sources, the *History* had to be disentangled and analyzed page by page. Sources had to be looked for in libraries. This process took roughly about two years.

Reindorf's bibliography was quite impressive considering the fact that he—as far as is known—had never traveled far beyond the river Volta and the Akuapem hills, except for a trip to Liberia in 1894.²²⁵ He was not just an assiduous researcher, but also a true lover of books and a collector of artefacts, newspapers, and old journals. He must have heavily relied on his Basel Mission colleagues and on the Mission's station library or archive at Osu for older written accounts about the Gold Coast and for field notes and reports about Akan, Gã, and Guan traditions noted down by the European missionaries and African catechists and pastors.

Reindorf used at least 23 published sources, several unpublished ones in manuscript form, and according to his own account he had collected evidence in the form of oral narratives, proverbs, oaths, songs, prayers, jokes,

²²⁵BMA D-20.27,7 (4). Reindorf to Christaller (Kru Coast, 27 June 1894), 1.

drum signals, and the like from more than 200 informants. Reindorf sometimes extracted verbatim, or quasi-verbatim, whole passages from a single source, and he equally often based a single paragraph on two or three different sources. At times he shortened or restructured text he had obtained from European writers (with chronological and/or thematic consequences), or he added material to them. He sometimes showed a preference for a particular European text on account of its brevity, but had recourse to other sources to prove particular points in his line of argument, thereby favoring a source that stood in a more intimate relationship with an event he was attempting to describe. Particularly interesting (but extremely demanding) was the question of why Reindorf ignored certain information contained in his published European sources.

Particularly noteworthy as regards the construction of the text of the *History* are Reindorf's efforts to improve on the spelling and correct representations of the pronunciation of toponyms and patronyms contained in his European sources. With the fixing into writing of toponyms, ethnonyms, and patronyms Reindorf heavily contributed to the already ongoing fixing into writing of African terms. As names are subject to historical changes, Reindorf's interpretations should therefore be critically read by modern historians and linguists.

At times Reindorf impressively tied up information from oral narratives and from European accounts. Reindorf understood history as "the methodical narration of events in chronological order," a perception which was congruent with contemporary European historiography. With this theoretical premise, Reindorf was confronted with the hitherto unknown question of how to integrate both written European sources and historical data derived from oral narratives and other forms of African cultural expressions with recognition of the differences in the style of presentation and epistemology, as well as a genre-specific analysis. At the interface of European and African sources, Reindorf had to determine the time of reference of the oral narratives, songs, oaths, etc. in order to be able to reconstruct the past and to translate the information into a narrative text. Determining the time of reference of oral narratives and other forms of oral art was and still is inarguably one of the most difficult tasks that historians who attempt to write Ereignisgeschichte are challenged with. Reindorf had to pay tribute to this, and his historical reconstruction in the form of the *History* has its share of inaccuracies and even errors as regards chronology.

The identification of Reindorf's informants (on oral historical narratives, genealogies, proverbs, oaths, songs, prayers, jokes, drum signal) is largely based on "text archaeology," a method suggested by the French historian Gérard Chouin, by which texts and their constituent units are understood as

being structured around a speaker and a particular informative unit within a particular context (place, time, social status, sex, etc.).²²⁶ The theory lends itself well for a critical analysis and decompilation of Reindorf's complex narratives. The identification of the speaker "behind the text," i.e., an informant or a written source, is/was in Reindorf's case particularly difficult in very dense and "tangled" passages.

By digging, or rather "questioning," the text material, valuable information on the identity of the speaker (even if only in the form of a constructed type), the context, and the relationship between the various informative units could be unearthed. The following questions had to be asked: what relationship might have existed between the information and the informant (also in terms of family)? Was he/she an eyewitness? Was he/she a professional transmitter of historical information? Which language or professional group might the information most probably have belonged to? Which sex and social status may he/she have had? Was he/she possibly related to the protagonist(s) of a particular narrative? Reindorf's biography then provided pivotal information that led to further questions: was Reindorf an eyewitness or observer himself (from the 1840s onwards)? Might the informant have been one of his classmates at the Basel Mission school, most of whom rose to prominent positions in the latter part of their lives? Which information was probably derived from his friends? Which data used in the *History* might have come from members of the large Reindorf family? Which Asante, Ewe, or Fante person, with whom he had contact might have provided him with information?

This "text archaeology" resulted in the identification of 25 plausible informants by name. The sifting of the oral narratives contained in the *History* confirms the view that historical narratives in the Gã and Akan context were essentially the concern and property of their component families rather than of a whole language group, a polity, or a community. Identities of a family/lineage or a quarter were bound up with the belief in common descent from a founding ancestor, whose merits and exploits were preserved and transmitted in the form of oral narratives. Narratives of one particular male elite lineage could, however, in the course of time be ideologized and become "national" history while the memories of the politically subordinate lineages were suppressed or their narratives forgotten.

Historical narratives like the ones presented in the *History* look final and unproblematic on the printed page. But using the text as a historical source

²²⁶Gérard Chouin, "Seen, Said, or Deduced? Travel Accounts, Historical Criticism, and Discourse Theory: Towards an 'Archeology' of Dialogue in Seventeenth-Century Guinea," *HA* 28(2001), 53-70. Chouin based his method on Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of language. See Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtine, le principe dialogique* (Paris, 1981).

we have to be aware that it resulted from a cumulative series of choices and decisions made:

by the person who authored the oral text,

by the person(s) who narrated, transmitted, and perhaps recomposed the stories within the community,

by the person who verbally narrated the stories to Reindorf,

by Reindorf as collector and editor (and translator in the case of Akan and Ewe).

Reindorf's *History* is a fine intellectual achievement characterized by innovative methods and intellectual independence by an author who selectively adapted ideas from Western historiography and philosophy via his Basel Mission education and self-training via the reading of European books, as well as from local notions of history and language philosophy to fuse them into something altogether new at the time. As an employee of the Basel Mission, Reindorf was often described as "eigensinnig", "obstinate" or "self-willed," a clear indication of his individuality, self-confidence, and a critical spirit that was determined not simply to accede to rules with which he did not agree.²²⁷ The relationship between Reindorf and the Basel Mission certainly involved an unequal distribution of power, but there is strong indication that the "obstinate" Reindorf did not lose control over his own definitions of how best to re-view and interpret the past, as well as how best to manage the present and stage his visions of the future.

Unfortunately, Reindorf did not leave any written work on the theories that underpinned his methods. But as his principles of investigation and his overall theoretical framework are deployed as scientific practice in the *History*, they could be reconstructed by focusing on methods and techniques as applied in his texts. Like other scholars, Reindorf wrote with an underlying logic, applied techniques, and composed lines of arguments that may be expressed as a theoretical model. Reindorf's *History* extended the frontiers of historical and methodological knowledge, pointing towards questions and debates that only resurfaced fifty years later, and demonstrated that "a continent once thought devoid of historical significance has always been, in fact, at the very heart of all of human history."²²⁸ Reindorf wrote from an African

²²⁷BMA D-1.24. Christiansborg 50, Schrenk to Basel (31 Jan 1872), in Hänger, *Sklaverei*, 25. Cf. Bohner, "Die Organisation der Heidenpredigt im Stationsgebiet," Referat, ausgearbeitet und vorgetragen in der Generalkonferenz der Baseler Missionare in Akropong, Westafrika, den 13. März 1883, von H. Bohner, in BMA *Missionsmagazin* (1883), 315. On the concept of "strategic deviants" in the Basel Mission context see Jon Miller, *The Social Control of Religious Zeal: a Study of Organizational Contradictions* (New Brunswick 1994), 115, 207n9, and idem., *Missionary Zeal and Institutional Control. Organizational Contradictions in the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast, 1828-1917* (Ann Arbor, 2003).

²²⁸Falola/Jennings, *Sources and Methods*, xx.

point of view and conceded to Africans a voice and an ability to shape history actively, in marked contrast to his European predecessors and contemporaries. He followed a cooperative-interactive approach, drew attention to various forms of verbal art as resources to investigate the past, and pursued an interdisciplinary approach by ethnology and linguistics.

A work like Reindorf's *History* requires patience of its readers. The process of identifying his sources was time-consuming but at the same time as gratifying and attractive as the activity of a crime scene investigator who has successfully tracked down a suspect, understood his motives, identified the murder weapon, and reconstructed the spatial and chronological details of the crime.²²⁹ With his texts, Reindorf was successful in painting a dense, colourful, and vivid picture of the past. The oral narratives in the *History* depict both continuity and periods of intense conflict, conformity and individual initiative, and causation is explained in both supernatural and rational terms.²³⁰ Reindorf's descriptions are the more valuable because, in marked contrast to modern academic African historiography, they breathe the culture-specificity of communication patterns inherent in Gã and Akan oral texts.

XII

The texts of the two Gã manuscripts amounting to roughly 600 folio pages altogether are, apart from the Bible, unique in terms of size and content. Their immeasurable value for historical and linguistic research, for literary study, and for the production of educational material cannot be gainsaid. Reindorf's texts are reproduced and transcribed in all their aspects. The Gã manuscripts are written with clear and easily readable handwriting with relatively few words and phrases illegible as a result of overwriting or smudges. Insertions and margins are occasionally in very small letters, though, and hard to decipher.

Punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, and words presumed to be misspelled are reproduced exactly as they appear in the original text. However, minor spelling mistakes in the English text—but only those that are obviously meaningless (e.g., “hade” instead of “had”) are corrected without a note. Crossed-out words or sentences replaced by interlinear notes or margins, and changes of word order indicated by small numbers over the words in the Gã manuscripts are always given in their corrected form in the text.

²²⁹Cf. Jones, *Quellenproblematik*, 190.

²³⁰Cf. J.F. Ade Ajayi, “The Educational Process and Historiography in Contemporary Africa: Background Paper” in *The Educational Process and Historiography in Africa* (Paris, 1985), 16–17.

The uncorrected originals are referred to in the annotation. However, long deletions are sometimes included in the main text if they do not interrupt the flow of the text, and if they are considered valuable information for researchers. All marginalia by Reindorf, Christaller, and Schopf on the sides, top, or bottom of the manuscript pages that concern topics like printing, comments on the main text, and personal messages are also faithfully reproduced in the notes.

The Gã language belongs to the so-called Kwa group of the Niger-Congo stock of languages and it is very closely related to Adangme.²³¹ Gã orthography has undergone various changes since its reduction to writing in the mid-nineteenth century. The Basel missionaries Zimmermann, Stanger, and Locher at Osu worked actively towards the creation of a written Gã language and the production of a Gã literature in the early 1850s. It has to be borne in mind that the transfer of a spoken language into a written and grammaticized one is in itself a complex sociolinguistic process and involved much decision-making. The creation and adoption of writing conventions proved to be a challenge to the missionaries. At the beginning, the Basel missionaries kept to the "Rules for reducing unwritten languages to alphabetical writing in Roman characters, with reference especially to the languages spoken in Africa," laid down by Rev. Henry Venn of the Church Missionary Society in 1848.²³² In 1854 these "Rules" were superseded by the "Standard Alphabet" by the Berlin Professor Richard Lepsius (1810-84), which necessitated the rewriting of older manuscripts and publications (and again in 1863) and which was henceforth adopted by the various missionary societies, including the Basel mission and Carl Christian Reindorf.²³³

The missionaries also took far-reaching decisions as to which dialects should be standard "Hochsprache" with consequences on Ghana's language policy to the present. In 1855 Zimmermann noted after a journey to the Gã-

²³¹Within this Kwa group, the Gã language is rather less closely related to Yoruba, Grebo, and Nupe, but presumed to be more related to Akan and Ewe. See Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu, "Linguistic Pre-History and Historical Reconstruction: the Ga-Adangme Migrations," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 13(1972), 88.

²³²The Basel missionary Johannes Zimmermann met CMS Inspector H. Venn in London in January 1850 while travelling to West Africa. Paul Steiner, *Ein Freund Afrikas: Lebensbild des Basler Missionars J. Zimmermann* (Basel, 1917), 52.

²³³According to Zimmermann, it took him and his African assistant Thomas Kwatei fully six months to rewrite the texts in 1855-56. See BMA *Jahresbericht* 41 (1856), 90-91; *Missionsmagazin* (1851), 234; *Missionsmagazin* (1856), 33-34. Richard Lepsius, *Das Allgemeine linguistische Alphabet* (Berlin, 1855); Lepsius, *Standard Alphabet for Reducing Unwritten Languages and Foreign Graphic Systems to a Uniform Orthography in European Letters* (London, 1863). See also Johann G. Christaller, *Twi Mmeseusem Mpena-Ahansia Mmoaano. A Collection of three Thousand and Six Hundred Tshi Proverbs* (Basel, 1879), iii; *Für Afrika bestimmt* (Basel, 1995), 17.

Adangme-speaking communities of Shai and Krobo that the Gã could well become the “Hochsprache” for those communities.²³⁴ As such, the written Gã language must be clearly regarded as a missionary construct. Whether and how this creation of a written standardized Gã language out of different dialects influenced nationalist thought in Gã society in the second half of the nineteenth century must be left to further research.

The missionaries often met to discuss linguistic questions and to straighten out differences in their translations and transcriptions.²³⁵ Gã was (and still is) considered more difficult to learn and understand than Akan, and the missionaries found it in its oral form hard to grasp and tremendously difficult.²³⁶ Shifting the African concept of orality (hearing) to literacy (seeing) by reducing the Gã to writing, they were able to get a kind of order into, control over, and access to the language for themselves. They had to be made aware by Africans that they often lacked proper intonation since, after several years of language study they were still totally unaware of the fact that Akan and Gã, the languages under study were tonal languages.²³⁷ Missionary construction of a language also meant the transfer of pre-Christian Gã religious terminology into Christian vocabulary and thus the changing of meanings, the appropriation of loanwords from German and English and their Gã-isation, and the introduction of new linguistic creations that did not exist before.²³⁸

The role of the African assistants in the process of translating and transcribing in the 1850s and 1860s was crucial. Zimmermann himself gave a very vivid account of the process of transcription and translation in 1856:

Here . . . everything has to be seized from the mouth of the people, the writing itself as well as the written material must first be created; we rely on our assistants, and they again are neither certain nor ready like books to quietly hold on. When I work with my assistant

²³⁴BMA *Missionsmagazin* (1856), 87.

²³⁵BMA *Missionsmagazin* (1854), 37.

²³⁶J.G. Christaller, *Die Töne der Negersprache* (Basel, 1893), 8-9.

²³⁷BMA *Missionsmagazin* (1856), 51; Christaller, *Die Töne*, 4-5.

²³⁸For very good analyses of missions and languages, although in other cultural contexts, see Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution. Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (2 vols.: Chicago, 1991); J.D.Y. Peel, “The Pastor and the Babalawo: the Interaction of Religions in Nineteenth-Century Yorubaland,” *Africa* 60(1990), 338-69; V.L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism. Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Ithaca, 1988); Birgit Meyer, “Translating the Devil. An African Appropriation of Pietist Protestantism. The Case of the Peki Ewe in Southeastern Ghana, 1847-1992” (PhD., University of Amsterdam, 1995); Patrick Harries, “The Roots of Ethnicity: Discourse and the Politics of Language Construction in South-East Africa,” *African Affairs* 87(1988), 25-52.

and he becomes tired or sleepy, I have to stop work. When I myself cannot work, he does not do very much either. These are just some of the difficulties we encounter; others, like the gaining of words for spiritual terms, the rebirth of the language as such, not to mention the total newness and difference of the African languages and the japhetic and semitic languages.²³⁹

Turning the focus again to Reindorf and the *History*, his efforts to improve on the spelling and correct representations of the pronunciation of toponyms and patronyms contained in his European sources are noteworthy. With the fixing into writing of various eponyms included in the oral narratives, Reindorf contributed heavily to the ongoing fixing into writing of African terms. Nevertheless (or perhaps rather because of that), Reindorf's interpretations should be critically assessed by modern historians and linguists. It is hard to assess the Gã people's reception and view of the written Gã language created by the missionaries from evidence found in the Basel Mission archives. Today, they are clearly aware of major differences between the spoken and the written Gã language and often term the modern written Gã as a kind of "European" Gã. In 1990, after reforms and changes of Gã spelling in 1929 and again in the late 1950s, definite rules were laid down to be used in schools, literature, and official communication which were based on the recommendations of the Orthography Committee of 1968.²⁴⁰

The transcription of Reindorf's texts of 1891 and 1912 makes no changes to the Gã text—leaving "mistakes" in grammar, spelling, or pronunciation from today's point of view. However, as only a handful of specialists would be able to grasp Lepsius' alphabet, I decided to revise Reindorf's spelling in accordance with the modern Gã orthography of 1990, where no interpretative work by the editor is involved. The following changes were made:

"tsh" is replaced by "ts"

the long, stretched "s," pronounced as in English "shoe," is replaced by "sh"

"ds" is replaced by "j"

underlined "o" and "e" are replaced by "ɔ" and "ɛ" respectively

supralined vowels indicating length are replaced by doubling the vowels.

However, in line with the overall aim of treating the Gã texts as a source, avoiding changes of the original and making as much information as possible available to the reader, other features of modern Gã orthography have been ignored:

²³⁹BMA *Jahresbericht* 41 (1856), 90-91, my translation

²⁴⁰*Gã Wiemoi* (Accra, 1996); E.O. Apronti, "New Orthographies for Ga and Adangme," *Research Review* 5/5(1969), 52-58.

Although Gã is a tonal language, modern Gã orthography does not take account of tones. Tones occasionally (unfortunately, not consistently) given in the original texts are indicated with ` [grave] (the first of one or more high tone syllables) and ´ [acute] (the first of one or more syllables of non-high tone, where the final syllable has a falling tone) in the new edition of the *History*.

Reindorf's practices of word division is retained.

Modern Gã orthography indicates the future tense (2nd and 3rd sg., 1st pl. and impersonal pronoun) and the negative form of the aorist habitual and progressive tenses by tripling the vowel. This rule has not been adopted.

Reindorf's spelling of words (verbs) containing a suppressed vowel (i.e., not pronounced in speech) is retained.

Reindorf's practice of providing nasal signs (~) is retained.

Although the strategy of mixing old and new spellings will definitely attract a certain (hopefully only small!) amount of criticism, both the full preservation of Lepsius' orthography or the whole adoption of the new Gã spelling rules would include more disadvantages.²⁴¹ Toponyms, ethnonyms, hydronyms, and patronyms have been kept in Reindorf's mode of spelling even if there is a modern look-alike equivalent. In the introductory chapters and the annotations, modern spellings as used by African scholars were adapted.²⁴²

XIII

In translating the Gã texts into English I have tried to remain as close to the original as possible and to give a faithful rendering of Reindorf's work, keeping its social, economic, and political context in mind. However, readers have to remember that a translation is always a "creation" comprising numerous conscious or unconscious interpretative work. Translating is a social process full of decision-making, and even the best translation can never replace the original.²⁴³

Following the suggestions and arguments of Fage in the 1950s, Grey in the 1960s, and Verdier and Cissoko in the mid-1980s, I have attempted to avoid the use of such terms like "chief," "tribe," "feudalism," "kingdom," "fetish" etc. in the introduction and translations.²⁴⁴ Although they were used

²⁴¹For a similar approach see H.M.J. Trutenau, "A Method for Preparing Texts for Diachronic Comparison with an Example: a critical Edition of C. Schöningh's *Ga Catechism*," *Research Review* 9/3(1973), 137.

²⁴²Ethnonyms (and other African terms) and their spelling have been much too freely used without taking account of the historicity (shifts of meaning, reference, or spelling over time). See Kiyaga-Mulindwa, "Social and Demographic Changes," 69-70.

²⁴³Heintze, "Oral Tradition," 54, and Winsnes, *Reliable Account*, xxvii-xxviii.

²⁴⁴See Fage, "Some General Considerations;" Richard Gray, "A Report on the Third Conference on African History and Archaeology, SOAS, University of London, 3-7 July

by Reindorf himself, and in spite of their usage in modern Ghana and by many African scholars, I advocate that either more neutral English terms and/or the original term in the Gã (or other African languages in other contexts) be used.²⁴⁵ The terms “fetish” and “tribe” clearly have a negative connotation on the one hand and they are imprecise and often blur the view of the researcher on the historical reality on the other. A term such as “chief” occurring in the English *History* is contrasted with at least five corresponding expressions in the Gã text. The use of unsuitable Western vocabulary falsifies the African situation and tends to identify it with other cultures, thus robbing it of its inmost character, its authenticity, and its vital force.²⁴⁶ Yankah noted that the confusion caused by mistranslating the Akan okyeame as “linguist” would not have arisen if the cultural uniqueness of this office had been recognized and truly acknowledged.²⁴⁷

People engaged in African research have a duty to re-examine the tools they use to establish the nature of institutions and concepts, to define African terms and use them in their studies just as Wilks, McCaskie and others have done in the context of Asante history and culture. In 1952 Fage has already argued that

there is the very great difficulty of knowing deeply enough about the background on either side of the colonial relationship to avoid dangerously superficial judgements. It is all too easy, even for Englishmen to talk loosely and glibly about “the British government,” or “the Colonial Office,” or “British colonial policy” . . . without realising that each of these is a short-hand term for something immeasurably complex.²⁴⁸

African scholars are compelled to query the terminology and concepts they use and by writing more “Ideengeschichte” gain a clearer understanding of African thought.²⁴⁹ Reindorf's Gã text is at times ambiguous, even

1961,” *JAH* 3(1962), 175-91., R. Verdier, “Critical Reflections on the Ideas of Law and Power in Pre-Colonial Africa—Terminological and Conceptual Problems” in *The Educational Process and Historiography in Africa* (1985), 21-34; and Sékéné Mody Cissoko, “Problems of Conceptualization and Definition in African History with Reference to some Social and Political Institutions,” in *ibid.*, 79-90.

²⁴⁵For quite recent uses of the term “fetish” see J.E.G. Sutton, “The Volta River Salt Trade: the Survival of an Indigenous Industry,” *JAH* 22(1981), 49; and Kwesi Yankah, *Speaking for the Chief. Okyeame and the Politics of Akan Royal Oratory* (Bloomington, 1995), 30.

²⁴⁶Cissoko, “Problems of Conceptualization,” 79.

²⁴⁷Yankah, *Speaking for the Chief*, 26.

²⁴⁸Fage, “Some General Considerations,” 28-29.

²⁴⁹Verdier, “Critical Reflections,” 33.

obscure, and a proper translation cannot be guaranteed at every point. In a considerable number of cases the translation has perforce been influenced by informed guesses based on my increasing knowledge of Gã philosophy of language, familiarity with Reindorf's way of thinking and use of language, and on research on Gã history and culture in general. However, difficult passages and terminology are referred to, commented on, and discussed in the annotations.

Matters of style have been the most problematic and challenging aspect of the translation work. Gã style of the nineteenth century (both in writing and speaking) is obviously not the same as today because attitudes toward language and its use cannot be divorced from specific cultural beliefs and practices over time. In the absence of any systematic linguistic diachronic study on style—apart from Yankah's work on Akan in 1995—one might guess (relying on personal observation anyway) that certain features of style are not strictly adhered to in modern speech, while compliance to the same or other features of style used in the nineteenth century is enjoined, depending on the contexts.²⁵⁰

The language used by Reindorf often includes a display of Gã verbal artistry through the use of veiled speech or metaphors, proverbs, and archaic expressions. Reindorf also deployed various strategies—in line with Gã perception of the potential power of words and naming—to avoid the negative effects of certain words. He resorted to indirection, used euphemisms, and avoided verbal taboos (especially the mentioning of an Asantehene's name).

The fact that oral historical narratives were performed with audience involvement in precolonial times is clearly reflected in Reindorf's frequent use of direct speech and in his occasional switching from the past into the present tense and back. Especially in the second Gã manuscript of 1912, Reindorf often made use of proverbs as a rhetorical device of indirection in the discussion of delicate issues. Particularly noteworthy are dialogues; they occasionally occur in the English text of 1895 and they are a distinguished feature of the Gã texts of 1891 and 1912. The frequent use of direct speech in the Gã texts (assuming that Reindorf consciously applied this form of text) might indicate that he expected his Gã readers to appreciate a more entertaining and lively form of history than the European style of narration.

The above-mentioned aspects of style in the Gã texts rendered my task quite difficult. Great efforts were made to preserve the flavor and characteristics of Reindorf's Gã texts. To avoid falling prey to my own prejudices

²⁵⁰Yankah, *Speaking for the Chief*; see also Thomas C. McCaskie, "Death and the Asantehene: A Historical Meditation," *JAH* 30 (1989), 422, and Sandra E. Greene, *Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter. A History of Meaning and Memory in Ghana* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2002), 84.

when faced with ambiguous passages, difficult figurative speech, and archaisms (as a translator with a fairly good knowledge of the historical context), numerous discussions with Ghanaian friends and family members have been held in the past years on the translated product(s). The present translation should be regarded as provisional because some of its conclusions are tentative, and of course every piece of text also contains its share of errors. Moreover, I am not a first-language English speaker, so the text—perhaps not much unlike Reindorf's English text—may appear clumsy to the reader. Reindorf freely acknowledged his "poor" use of English in the preface of the *History*.²⁵¹

Reindorf's descriptions are the more valuable because, in marked contrast to modern African historiography, they breathe the culture-specificity of communication patterns inherent in Gã and Akan oral texts. The esthetics of language and communication of the Gã and Akan were characterized by a pervasive system of rhetorical indirections expressing itself in circumlocution and in metaphorical and proverbial speech.²⁵²

One of the few Europeans that alluded to the figurative speech of the Gã was Paul Erdmann Isert in the 1790s:

The Blacks possess a very sound philosophy. In their conversations they always use very appropriate metaphors. If a Black wants to say, for instance, that something makes him very unhappy or heavy-hearted, he expresses it with such words as, "It burns my stomach." They have a great variety of such expressions, . . . ²⁵³

These culture-specific communication patterns derived from the idea of the potency of the spoken word, which in turn emanated from the notion that in using one's breath to produce sounds and language, humans had the ability to change reality and affect the world around them in both positive and negative ways. Breath was more than simply a sign of life; it was also associated with the life soul or spirit.²⁵⁴ European observers in the late nineteenth century observed that, for example, the Gã believed that there was a spiritual connection between a human or any other perceived phenomenon and his or her or its name:

Even with the mentioning of the name of an illness the Gã feels injured because who would pronounce the name of such an evil ill-

²⁵¹*History* (1895), vi.

²⁵²Yankah, *Speaking for the Chief*, 3-4, 11.

²⁵³Isert (1788), 241-42, in Winsnes, *Letters on West Africa*, 143.

²⁵⁴The Gã word, *mumo*, expresses both "breath" and "spirit;" Mary Esther Kropp-Dakubu, *Gã-English Dictionary, with English-Gã Index* (Accra, 1999, 108-09.

ness! In his view the name and the essence [Wesen] of something is identical, and might not someone fall ill by the mentioning of the illness? As a clever escape there is the word "evil animal."²⁵⁵

From this notion on the potential power of the spoken word derived the significance of the Gã naming ritual called Kpojiemo, the giving of an "ugly name" to a newborn baby after the untimely death of a baby that preceded him or her, and the complex Gã system of naming children.²⁵⁶ As the spoken word was also believed to possess a destructive potential, verbal taboos were enacted or circumlocutions applied. Probably the most important category of verbal taboos among the Akan, among whom avoidance was rigidly applied, was to mention a past or present Asantehene's, in fact any Ohene's name.²⁵⁷ Reindorf's accounts on Asante history are, as a matter of fact, characterized by a significant absence of the particular name of an Asantehene over long tracts of text.²⁵⁸ Although it may be assumed that Reindorf himself did not adhere to these verbal taboos, his informants on Asante history may still have complied with them.

Another culture-specific aspect of communication derived from the risks involved in all face-to-face communication with its associated close spatial and temporal link between the speaker and the addressee(s), as opposed to the written word. Redressing strategies of communicative and physical distancing was achieved by the institution of the *okyeame* (pl. *akyeam*), the spokesperson in any formal communicative setting in Akan and Gã cultural practice. The *okyeame* represented the socio-political significance of oratory and the spiritual notion of the power of the spoken word, enhanced by the sanctity of political or religious office-holders. Reindorf's account also includes references to the *okyeame*'s staff of office whose motif on top of the staff represented proverbial speech.²⁵⁹

The nature of the proverb and figurative speech as impersonal, as semantic indefiniteness and as a culture-specific axiom made it an appropriate rhetorical device in the negotiation of delicate discourse, which Reindorf also applied in his discussions and reflections on Gã government, the role of the Europeans in Gold Coast history, and slavery in the Gã manuscript of

²⁵⁵Bernhard Struck, "Pockenschutzmittel der Gaer (Goldküste)," *Globus* 92(1907), 149, my translation; also see Greene, *Sacred Sites*, 85.

²⁵⁶*History* (1895), 23-24. Thus Owu or Alema, prominent names in nineteenth-century Osu and Accra history, were "ugly names." For the Gã naming system see A.A. Amartey, *Omanyé Aba* (Accra, 1990), 65-86.

²⁵⁷Yankah, *Speaking for the Chief*, 50-51.

²⁵⁸See e.g. *History* (1895) chap. 18, on the Katamanso war and the flight of the Asantehene.

²⁵⁹Yankah, *Speaking for the Chief*, 11, 19.

1912.²⁶⁰ In his Gã texts Reindorf perfectly applied Gã and Akan communicative aesthetic devices of indirection that were expected of speakers in public forums: veiled speech or metaphor, archaisms, and proverbs. These were the highlights of good rhetoric.²⁶¹ This might be just another reason why Reindorf's *History* has a special place in African historiography. The heart of the *History* lies in the richness and originality of the text(s) presented.

XIV

A scientifically annotated edition and translation of manuscript texts of the size and quality like Reindorf's could not be accomplished without financial and intellectual assistance for which I am very thankful. I am immeasurably thankful to my wife, Vivian Hauser-Renner and my friends and family for their personal support. Thomas McCaskie stated in 1995 that "the intellectual history of Basel Mission enterprise on the Gold Coast is as long in possibility as it is short of investigators."²⁶² It is high time that Carl Christian Reindorf's *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* finds a special place in West African historiography.

Unfortunately Reindorf's *History* has also been the victim of much abuse in the past. During the colonial period Africans and Europeans acting out of beliefs and interests of their own used historical arguments as a weapon in conflicts over resources, labor, and authority. Contestants in the colonial courts of the early twentieth century took Reindorf's *History* hostage and invoked historical arguments—particular selective representations of the past—to serve their purpose. Thus the *History* became an authority, and "customary law" was invented and a very static perception of history (that predominates in popular view up to today) got the upper hand, as some representations of the past prevailed and were enshrined in colonial legislation and authoritative traditions which bore little relationship to past realities. Reindorf's *History* is not the "truth" or a representation of the way things "had been before," and we would do Reindorf wrong with abusing his work for nationalistic or other political purposes.

Historical knowledge relies heavily on the available source material, fact and source selection and interpretation procedures, and with the change of time and of perspective historians are prone to shift the emphases and alter their methods and theoretical models to interpret the past. Historical

²⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 42, 52.

²⁶¹*Ibid.*, 56.

²⁶²Thomas C. McCaskie, "Asante and Gã: the History of a Relationship" in Jenkins, *Recovery*, 144.

research has demonstrated that the notion of a “tribal/ethnic identity” was far less important in the precolonial experience than nineteenth- and twentieth-century oral narratives and early historiography would like to make one believe. Historical sociopolitical organization of West African societies like the Fante, Asante, or Gã allowed and managed diversity to a very high degree. The usefulness of this idea of fluidity of identities and of tolerance is evident: it meant cooperation across economic, political, or linguistic borders, maximizing economic options by extended networks and understanding the unities within the diversity of a particular area.

As a matter of fact, recent West African historical research demonstrates that concepts of identities, relationships, and institutions were not immutable “tradition,” but dynamic historical formations shaped by specific processes of economic and sociopolitical change.²⁶³ It has been argued that mobilization, self-reliance, and initiatives for economic development have to be backed by confidence in what people know and have learned to do. Making historical knowledge and cultural practices relevant to current and future needs not only ensures their survival, but local knowledge embedded in cultural formations might well provide the foundation for development. But for cultural practices to serve this purpose and endure into the future, we must do away with the notion of eternal “traditions” and see culture “less as nostalgic relics of an ancient past and more as institutions associated with power, individual and collective identities, temporal markers, and instruments of moralization, knowledge and social integration.”²⁶⁴

It might be hoped that the new edition of Reindorf's *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* can contribute to a renewed debate on African historiography. In 1981 J.D. Fage stated that African historiography has become increasingly similar to that of any other part of the world since 1948, when the University of London created the first lectureship in African history.²⁶⁵ This is both right and wrong; right because post-1948 and particularly post-1960 African historiography has reached the same academic standards as postulated and put into practice in Western historiography. It is nevertheless wrong because—apart from the comparative scarcity of documentary source material for early periods and the consequent need to follow an interdisciplinary approach—modern African historiography is still plagued with ideological and economic constraints. There is a lack of almost everything for the historian who lives in Africa: lack of resources and possibilities.

²⁶³Mann, “Interpreting Cases,” 201-02.

²⁶⁴Joseph K. Adjaye, “Rituals, Postmodernity and Development,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 6(2002), 12; Irene Odotei, “Festivals in Ghana: Continuity, Transformation and Politicisation of Tradition,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* ns6(2002), 32-33.

²⁶⁵Fage, “Development,” 41.

African historiography is more than ever under pressure to produce a “usable past.” But who is the modern historian writing for? For the Gã? For the Ghanaian? For Africans generally? African history has to go back to the people on the street. Today popular debates on historical issues on the streets of Lagos or Accra still relate to “tribes” and “customs” as eternal determinants of African history: “That is how we did it since time immemorial!” “This is our custom!” “We don’t do it like the other tribe xy!” Today we have to admit that academic African historiography and educational institutions in almost all African countries have not yet managed to “decolonize” our minds. African historiography is able to show that “tribes” and “customary law” were inventions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. African history can explain how Africans identified themselves in many other ways than via their family or language group; that they had institutions for diversity management; how they tackled problems of corruption, waste and the spread of epidemics’ and above all that African institutions were subject to change and that Africans were not passive members of a collectivity, but highly innovative, entrepreneurial, and pragmatic.

Past, and partly still current, philosophical notions of history in (at least) Accra and Akan-speaking areas include the idea that stories of origin and ancient conflicts should not be talked about and/or disclosed to outsiders. This practice was/is a powerful mechanism in the above-mentioned concept of integration and peaceful conflict- and diversity-management in southern Ghanaian societies. The new edition of Reindorf's *History* unavoidably contains a lot of controversial history and what might be termed “tabooed talk” because I strongly believe that we can and should learn from these conflicts, that history must be controversial and debated to a certain extent, and that, finally, only such debate can provide for solutions for the present and the future. History, otherwise, remains mute, static, and barren.

Nii, so I am not taking away your cloth.

This is the little that I can tell them,

Because whoever gives his proverb, understands his proverb.

So I explained the proverb to them a little,

So you shouldn't get angry that perhaps what you wouldn't say I
stand up and say it.

For I am speaking by your power. It isn't my power.

But the power of the great God of Heaven.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu, *One Voice: the Linguistic Culture of Ga Accra Lineage* (Leiden, 1981), 27.